

Research Paper

Impact of Financial Education on Wedding Spending Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Investigates the effect of pre-marital financial education on wedding spending behavior among engaged couples. Against the backdrop of growing financial pressures and escalating costs associated with modern weddings, the dissertation addresses a critical gap in understanding whether financial literacy can enhance budget adherence and reduce financial stress during this significant life event. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 30 diverse engaged couples using structured questionnaires that measured demographic characteristics, participation in financial education, actual and planned wedding expenditures, and perceived financial stress. Statistical analyses, including mean percentage difference calculations and chi-squared tests, compared spending patterns between couples who had received financial education and those who had not. The results indicate that couples with pre-marital financial education exhibited significantly better budget adherence and reported lower financial stress post-wedding. Findings underscore the importance of integrating targeted financial education into pre-marital counseling programs to foster financially prudent decision-making and mitigate the risk of overspending. This dissertation provides empirical support for educational and policy interventions aimed at promoting financial well-being and marital stability during the wedding planning process.

Keywords: *Financial Education, Wedding Spending, Budget Adherence, Financial Literacy, Pre-Marital, Counseling, Financial Stress, Wedding Expenditure, Financial Planning, Engaged Couples, Marital Stability*

Weddings hold a significant and multifaceted role across cultures, serving not only as ceremonies symbolizing the formal union between two individuals but also as social events that consolidate familial ties and reinforce community bonds. These occasions are steeped in tradition, symbolism, and personal expression, often reflecting deep cultural values and social status. In many societies, weddings are characterized by elaborate rituals, festive celebrations, and considerable expenditures designed to commemorate this pivotal life transition in a memorable way.

Over recent decades, the landscape of weddings has undergone profound transformation. Factors such as globalization, the burgeoning wedding industry, widespread digital

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connectivity, and evolving cultural norms have expanded the options available to couples planning their weddings. Choices regarding venue, attire, invitations, décor, catering, and entertainment have become increasingly diverse and often more extravagant. Access to social media platforms has further intensified societal expectations, as couples are exposed to and influenced by images and narratives of lavish celebrations, setting high aspirational standards. Consequently, the pursuit to orchestrate a perfect wedding increasingly imposes considerable financial burdens on many, leading to elevated stress levels and anxiety associated with wedding planning.

The financial demands related to weddings extend beyond mere logistical challenges, penetrating the psychological domain and influencing marital dynamics. Scholarly research in psychology and family studies highlights that financial stress associated with significant life events like weddings often precipitates marital conflict, diminished relationship satisfaction, and, in some cases, long-term relationship instability. Financial disagreements are frequently cited among the leading causes of tension and dissatisfaction within couples, intensifying the importance of prudent financial management during this critical period. How couples approach budgeting and expenditure decisions for their weddings, therefore, has far-reaching implications that encompass their immediate mental health and financial security and can shape their future financial trajectory and relational well-being.

Despite the growing recognition of these challenges, a pervasive gap exists concerning financial knowledge and readiness among couples preparing for marriage. A considerable proportion of engaged individuals, particularly younger adults and those with limited prior exposure to personal finance management, lack essential skills such as effective budgeting, spending tracking, and strategic financial decision-making. This deficiency is often exacerbated by external social pressures emanating from families, peers, and cultural expectations that encourage spending beyond means or prioritize short-term display over long-term financial sustainability. Consequently, many couples inadvertently accumulate debt, exceed budgets, or suffer heightened anxiety as wedding expenses escalate unpredictably.

In this context, financial education emerges as a salient and promising solution. Financial education encompasses the development of knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to manage personal financial resources responsibly and effectively. Increasingly embraced by policymakers, educators, and mental health practitioners, financial education programs emphasize core competencies—budgeting, saving, debt management, and informed consumption—that directly address the complexities inherent in wedding planning. Evidence from economics, psychology, and family research highlights that higher financial literacy correlates with positive financial behaviors, including proactive planning, better income and expense management, and reduced susceptibility to impulsive or risky spending. Beyond individual knowledge acquisition, couples with shared financial literacy demonstrate enhanced financial communication, goal alignment, and collaborative problem-solving. These capabilities are crucial during wedding planning, which involves continuous negotiation and compromise on financial priorities. Pre-marital financial counseling and educational workshops have gained traction as preventive measures to mitigate post-wedding debt accumulation and financial conflict, contributing to healthier, more resilient marital relationships.

However, empirical investigations explicitly focusing on the impact of pre-marital financial education on wedding spending behavior remain limited. There is a pressing need to

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understand how financial education programs influence couples' adherence to budgets, perception of financial stress, and confidence in managing wedding expenditures and future finances. Clarifying these relationships will facilitate evidence-based enhancements to counseling practices, educational curricula, and policy initiatives aimed at supporting couples in this transitional phase.

Therefore, this dissertation rigorously explores the effects of pre-marital financial education on wedding spending behavior among engaged couples. The primary research question centers on whether participation in financial education prior to marriage is associated with improved adherence to planned wedding budgets, reduced financial stress during the planning process, and increased financial management confidence post-wedding. The dissertation hypothesizes that couples who engage in targeted financial education will exhibit more disciplined budgeting and decision-making practices both during wedding preparations and execution, ultimately reducing the incidence of overspending and associated negative financial and emotional outcomes.

Methodologically, the dissertation employs a multi-dimensional approach, integrating quantitative analysis of budgeting accuracy and spending patterns alongside qualitative assessment of perceived financial stress and confidence measures. Data collection is conducted through structured questionnaires administered to a selected cohort of engaged couples, with statistical analyses including chi-squared tests employed to assess the significance of observed differences between financially educated and non-educated groups, adjusting for potential confounders such as income levels, educational attainment, and cultural background.

The implications of this dissertation are broad and impactful. By elucidating the link between financial education and responsible wedding spending, this work can guide the development of more effective pre-marital counseling programs, targeted educational interventions, and supportive policies that aim to alleviate financial pressures on couples. The dissertation advocates for a comprehensive conception of financial preparedness that transcends technical knowledge to include communication skills, emotional regulation, and collaborative financial planning. Empowering couples in this manner not only supports the creation of joyful, memorable wedding experiences but also fosters the establishment of stable, financially secure marital partnerships that endure beyond the wedding day.

In summary, given the increasing financial stakes embedded in modern weddings and the accompanying psychological challenges, it is both timely and essential to integrate financial education into the broader framework of pre-marital preparation and societal support systems. This dissertation seeks to contribute valuable insights to this endeavor by advancing understanding of how psychological and educational interventions can forge pathways toward harmonious, resilient marriages grounded in sound financial management.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Financial education and literacy have been extensively studied across multiple disciplines, including economics, psychology, and public health, due to their critical influence on individual and household financial behaviors. At a broad level, financial literacy encompasses knowledge and competencies related to budgeting, saving, debt management, and prudent financial decision-making. Foundational research (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014) has consistently demonstrated that higher financial literacy equips individuals to better manage financial resources, adhere to budgets, and pursue long-term financial stability.

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These findings underscore the broad societal importance of promoting financial education as a means of enhancing economic well-being and preventing harmful financial outcomes like excessive debt or default.

Narrowing the focus to relationship and marital contexts, financial stress emerges as a significant factor influencing marital satisfaction and stability. Studies such as Archuleta et al. (2011) have identified wedding expenses in particular as a major contributor to financial strain in couples. These studies highlight how societal pressures to conform to idealized wedding standards lead many couples to overspend, creating financial burdens that sometimes extend well beyond the wedding event itself. This relationship-specific financial stress is known to exacerbate interpersonal conflict and reduce overall relationship quality.

Given these stakes, pre-marital counseling has been explored as a preventative mechanism fostering both relationship success and financial preparedness. Research by Stanley et al. (2006) indicates that couples who participate in pre-marital counseling—especially those sessions that address financial expectations and goal-setting—experience improved marital satisfaction and reduced likelihood of divorce. However, while the integrative benefits of counseling are well-documented, there remains a relative paucity of research investigating how focused financial education embedded within or alongside pre-marital counseling specifically affects wedding spending behaviors and subsequent financial stress.

Beyond these thematic areas, a critical gap surfaces in understanding the behavioral mechanisms by which financial education translates into real-world spending adherence and financial management within couples. While general positive correlations between financial literacy and budgeting exist, less is known about how cognitive, emotional, or communicative processes mediate this relationship in the context of wedding planning—a uniquely high-pressure financial event. For example, improved financial communication between partners, heightened financial self-efficacy, or shifts in spending attitudes may each serve as critical pathways; however, empirical exploration within this domain remains limited.

Another important but underexplored dimension is the influence of diversity factors such as age, culture, and socioeconomic status. Most existing studies focus on relatively homogeneous samples, often limited to young couples in Western contexts. Understanding how financial education impacts diverse populations with different cultural norms around weddings, resource availability, and familial expectations is necessary to tailor interventions appropriately and ensure inclusivity.

Furthermore, the mode and quality of financial education delivery are largely understudied concerning their differential efficacy. Whether financial education is self-directed, delivered via workshops, integrated into counseling, or provided through digital platforms can significantly affect outcomes. Comparative research that evaluates the effectiveness of these varying pedagogical approaches in the wedding planning context is scant.

Additionally, current literature tends to isolate wedding spending from broader financial behaviors, such as saving for joint assets, investing, or managing debt post-wedding. The extent to which financial education surrounding weddings influences these downstream financial behaviors and overall marital financial health is poorly understood, representing an important area for investigation.

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Finally, emotional and cultural drivers affecting wedding expenditure decisions have received insufficient scholarly attention within the financial education framework. Emotional spending driven by social comparison, identity expression, or family expectations can undermine budgeting efforts regardless of financial literacy. Addressing how financial education programs might integrate strategies to manage these emotional factors could enhance their impact but remains an open research question.

In summary, while existing research substantiates the value of financial education and highlights wedding-related financial stress as a critical concern, clear gaps persist. These include the need to elucidate behavioral mechanisms, explore diverse population impacts, assess education delivery methods, integrate wedding budgeting with overall financial planning, and consider emotional and cultural complexities. This dissertation aims to address these gaps by rigorously evaluating how pre-marital financial education influences couples' wedding spending behaviors and financial stress, thereby contributing to more effective and holistic intervention strategies tailored for engaged couples.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a framework or the blueprint of the entire dissertation. This includes parts such as the hypothesis, the details about the sample, the sampling methods, the tools used to collect data from the sample, the procedure followed to conduct the dissertation and the statistical tools that will be used to analyze the result obtained from the sample.

Each one mentioned above has rationale why it is being chosen and the explanations are based on research questions that has been arrived at, and methods to obtain answers for those questions, or to test hypothesis that has been arrived at.

Methodology is in detail, in each step, and acts as a guide to the researcher, as to how to go about conducting this dissertation. Like mentioned above, various topics provide more information about details and tools used in the dissertation.

Aim:

- To investigate the impact of pre-marital financial education on couples' wedding spending behavior.
- Compare wedding spending patterns between educated and non-educated couples.
- Assess adherence to wedding budgets.
- Evaluate financial stress and confidence post-wedding.

Hypothesis:

- Couples who receive financial education before marriage will exhibit more prudent spending behavior during their wedding planning compared to those who do not.
- This hypothesis posits that financial education leads to better budgeting and financial decision-making. financially educated people more likely control their marriage expenses while keeping in mind their other financial goals.

Independent Variable:

- Pre-marital Financial Education (whether the couple has received financial education or not).

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Dependent Variable:

Wedding Spending Behavior, operationalized as:

- Budget adherence (difference between planned budget and actual expenditure).
- Frequency of overspending or underspending categories.
- Financial Stress reported by the couples during/after wedding planning.
- Confidence in Financial Management post-wedding.

Sample:

The dissertation consisted of 30 engaged couples selected through a convenience sampling method, ensuring accessibility and relevance. The sample included couples from diverse backgrounds in terms of education, occupation, and income, providing a snapshot of the population preparing for marriage. The eligibility criterion required that couples were within the wedding planning phase, allowing accurate recall and assessment of financial behaviors relating to wedding expenditures.

Research Design:

This dissertation employed a quantitative research design to systematically investigate the impact of pre-marital financial education on couples' wedding spending behavior. A quantitative approach was chosen to allow for objective measurement of budget adherence, financial stress, and confidence, enabling statistical comparison between couples with and without financial education.

Sampling Design:

In this dissertation, a convenience sampling technique was employed to select the participants. Convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was chosen due to the specific nature of the target population—engaged couples who are married or are in the process of planning their weddings. This method allows for easier accessibility and relevance, enabling the researcher to efficiently gather data within practical constraints such as time and resources.

The sample consisted of 30 engaged couples who were contacted through various means, including social networks, community groups, and referrals. To ensure diversity and relevance, participants were chosen from varied socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The eligibility criteria required that couples were actively involved in wedding planning, ensuring accurate recall and reflection of their spending behaviors and experiences.

While convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population due to potential sampling bias, it remains appropriate for exploratory quantitative research such as this. The insights garnered from this sample provide valuable foundational data on the relationship between financial education and wedding spending behavior.

Material Used:

The primary material employed in this dissertation was a structured questionnaire (Annexure: I) designed specifically to capture comprehensive information about participants' demographic backgrounds, exposure to financial education programs, and detailed wedding spending behaviors. The questionnaire included sections on planned and actual wedding budgets, records of expenses, usage of financial management tools, and self-reported financial stress levels.

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The financial education component of the questionnaire assessed the nature, duration, and content of the pre-marital financial education programs attended by the couples. This included topics such as budgeting, saving, debt management, investment planning, and communication strategies aimed at fostering joint financial decision-making.

Moreover, the dissertation incorporated validated scales and well-established metrics to gauge budget adherence (measured as percentage deviation between planned and actual expenditures) and perceived financial stress to ensure reliability and comparability with existing literature.

Supplementary materials included educational content examples and financial planning guides used during the financial education programs, which addressed critical themes such as goal setting, cash flow management, debt reduction, and fostering transparent money discussions between partners.

Finally, data were compiled in a digital format for statistical analysis, allowing the use of appropriate software tools (e.g., SPSS, online Chi-squared calculators) to compute descriptive statistics and conduct inferential tests.

Statistical Tool

The data collected from the structured questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which offers advanced capabilities for quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages were computed to summarize participants' demographic profiles and key variables including budget adherence and financial stress levels.

To test the relationship between participation in financial education and wedding spending behavior, inferential statistical methods were employed. Specifically, the Chi-square test of independence was used to examine the association between categorical variables such as financial education status (yes/no) and budget adherence categories (under budget, on budget, over budget). Additionally, calculations of percentage deviation between planned and actual expenditures provided a quantitative measure of budget adherence.

These statistical techniques allowed for rigorous evaluation of the research hypotheses, ensuring that observed differences and associations were statistically significant and not due to chance. The use of SPSS also facilitated the handling of data coding, entry, validation, and generating comprehensive output for interpretation.

Procedure

The procedure for this dissertation was carefully planned and executed to ensure accurate and reliable data collection regarding the impact of pre-marital financial education on wedding spending behavior.

Initially, potential participants—engaged couples currently planning their weddings—were identified and contacted through community networks, social media platforms, and referrals. Eligibility criteria were established to include only those couples actively involved in wedding preparations.

Interested participants were provided with an overview of the dissertation objectives and assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained before

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data collection commenced. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire, administered either in person or electronically based on participant convenience.

The questionnaire comprised sections capturing demographic details, participation in financial education programs, planned and actual wedding budgets, record-keeping practices, financial stress levels, and confidence in managing post-wedding finances.

Each completed questionnaire was reviewed for completeness and consistency. The raw data were then securely entered into statistical software (SPSS) for analysis.

Throughout the data collection phase, standardized instructions and protocols were followed to minimize bias and ensure uniformity. Participants were encouraged to provide honest responses to reflect their true financial behaviors and perceptions.

Finally, the collected data were processed and analyzed to test the research hypotheses, utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between financial education and wedding spending outcomes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the statistics of the dissertation and the tables of the analysis that was done are included in this part. The analysis is done in order to find the relationship between the variables and the degree to which the variables influence each other.

A total of thirty engaged couples from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds participated in the present dissertation, each actively involved in wedding planning activities within Bangalore and surrounding regions. Data were analyzed using statistical tools including Mean, Percentage Difference, and Chi-Squared Test of Independence to assess the relationship between pre-marital financial education and wedding expense management. Gender was not differentiated, but financial education status and budget adherence categories were carefully considered to examine spending discipline. The following tables summarize and interpret the results of the analysis conducted, highlighting key differences in financial decision-making and stress among the groups.

RESULT:

Percentage Difference in Budget Adherence for each couple:

- Calculate: $(\text{Actual Expenditure} - \text{Planned Budget}) / \text{Planned Budget} * 100$.
- This gives the percentage by which the couple went over or under budget.

Assess Financial Education:

- Determine if the couple received pre-marital financial education.

Mean Percentage Difference:

- Separate the percentage difference values into two groups:
- Group 1: Couples who received financial education.
- Group 2: Couples who did not receive financial education.
- For each group, calculate the mean (average) percentage difference in budget adherence.

Table-1 shows the Mean Percentage Difference in Budget Adherence based on financial education group

Group	Number of Couples	Minimum Percentage Difference
Financial Education	15	2.05%
No Financial Education	15	7.29%

Table 1 compares the mean percentage deviation between planned wedding budgets and actual expenditures for two groups of engaged couples. Couples who participated in pre-marital financial education exhibited a low mean deviation of 2.05%, indicating close adherence to their planned budgets. In contrast, couples without financial education had a significantly higher mean deviation of 7.29%, reflecting greater tendencies to overspend. This difference highlights the positive influence of financial education on disciplined wedding spending behavior.

This shows that couples with financial education deviated less from their planned budget.

Determine Budget Adherence Category:

- For each couple in the dataset, we need the percentage difference calculated earlier: $(\text{Actual Expenditure} - \text{Planned Budget}) / \text{Planned Budget} * 100$

Use the percentage difference to categorize the group:

1. Significantly under budget (more than 10%)
2. Slightly under budget (less than 10%)
3. Within budget (within 5% of planned)
4. Slightly over budget (less than 10%)
5. Significantly over budget (more than 10%)

Table-2 shows the Budget Adherence based on categories:

Category	Financial Education	No Financial Education
Significantly under budget (>10%)	0	0
Slightly under budget (<10%)	5	0
Within budget ($\pm 5\%$)	6	5
Slightly over budget (<10%)	4	5
Significantly over budget (>10%)	0	5

Table 2 categorizes couples based on how closely they adhered to their planned wedding budgets, comparing those with financial education against those without. Among financially educated couples, most stayed within or slightly under budget; 5 couples slightly underspent, 6 stayed within 5% of their budget, and 4 slightly overspent. No couples in this group significantly overspent. In contrast, couples without financial education showed less budget control, with 5 couples overspending significantly by more than 10%, 5 slightly overspending, and 5 staying within budget. None reported underspending. This highlights that financial education supports more disciplined and effective budget adherence during wedding planning.

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Chi-Squared Test:

- The Chi-squared test examines whether there is a *statistically significant association* between financial education and budget adherence categories (under, within, over).
- It tells if the observed differences in budget adherence categories between the two groups are likely due to chance or a real relationship.
- It tests the distribution of the data, and if the two groups are distributed similarly across the budget adherence categories.

Chi-Squared Contingency Table:

Chi-Squared contingency table will summarize the frequency of couples in each group falling into each budget adherence category.

Table-3 shows the Chi-Squared Contingency for each group based on financial education Group

	Under Budget	Within Budget	Over Budget	Total
Financial Education	5	6	4	15
No Financial Education	0	5	10	15
Total	5	11	14	30

Table 3 shows the Chi-Squared Contingency Table summarizes the frequency of couples across budget adherence categories (Under Budget, Within Budget, Over Budget) for groups with and without financial education.

In the Financial Education group, 5 couples underspent their budget, 6 stayed within the planned budget, and 4 slightly overspent. Conversely, in the No Financial Education group, no couples underspent, only 5 adhered closely to their budget, while the majority (10 couples) overspent.

Conducting the Chi-Squared Test:

Software:

Use statistical software like SPSS, online Chi-squared calculators.

Steps:

- Input contingency table into the software.
- Run the Chi-squared test for independence.
- The software will output:
- The Chi-squared statistic.
- The degrees of freedom (df).
- The p-value.

Step: Compute Contingency

$$E_{ij} = \frac{(\text{Row Total}) \times (\text{Column Total})}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Table-4 shows the computed contingency for each financial education group

	Under Budget	Within Budget	Over Budget	Total
Financial Education	2.5	5.5	7	15
No Financial Education	2.5	5.5	7	15

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Table-4 the computed contingency table presents the expected frequencies of couples in each budget adherence category—Under Budget, Within Budget, and Over Budget—across the two groups: those with Financial Education and those without.

The computed contingency table is based on the expected frequencies—calculated using the Chi-Square test formula shown in your image. This formula determines the expected count for each cell under the assumption that there is no association between financial education and budget adherence. Specifically, the expected value for each cell (E_{ij}) is obtained by multiplying the respective row total and column total, then dividing by the grand total.

In this table, for both groups of 15 couples each, the expected counts are distributed evenly based on overall totals, with 2.5 couples expected to be under budget, 5.5 couples within budget, and 7 couples over budget.

Step: Compute Chi-Square statistic

- This statistic measures the difference between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies (if there were no association).
- A larger Chi-squared statistic indicates a stronger association.

Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

- $(5 - 2.5)^2 / 2.5 = 2.5 / 2.5 = 2.5$
- $(6 - 5.5)^2 / 5.5 = 0.25 / 5.5 \approx 0.045$
- $(4 - 7)^2 / 7 = 9 / 7 \approx 1.286$
- $(0 - 2.5)^2 / 2.5 = 6.25 / 2.5 = 2.5$
- $(5 - 5.5)^2 / 5.5 = 0.25 / 5.5 \approx 0.045$
- $(10 - 7)^2 / 7 = 9 / 7 \approx 1.286$

Step : Add up values

$$\chi^2 = 2.5 + 0.045 + 1.286 + 2.5 + 0.045 + 1.286 = 7.662$$

The chi-squared statistic measures how much the observed frequencies in each cell of the contingency table deviate from the expected frequencies calculated under the assumption of no association between the variables (in this case, financial education and budget adherence).

A computed chi-squared value of **7.66** indicates the total amount of discrepancy between observed and expected counts. The higher this value, the less likely it is that the observed distribution is due to chance alone.

Step : Degrees of freedom

$$df = (rows - 1) \times (columns - 1) = (2 - 1) \times (3 - 1) = 2$$

The degrees of freedom (df) in a chi-square test represent the number of independent values or categories that can vary when calculating the test statistic, given certain constraints. It is a

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key parameter used to determine the shape of the chi-square distribution and to interpret the significance of the test statistic.

In Computed Contingency Table, there are 2 rows (Financial Education and No Financial Education) and 3 columns (Under Budget, Within Budget, Over Budget). This means there are 2 degrees of freedom, indicating that once the row and column totals are fixed, two of the cell values can vary independently.

Step: Compute P-value

- The p-value tells the probability of observing the data we have if there were no actual association between the groups and budget adherence.
- If the p-value is less than chosen significance level (usually 0.05), you reject the null hypothesis.
- **Null Hypothesis:** There is no association between financial education and budget adherence.
- **Alternative Hypothesis:** There is an association between financial education and budget adherence.

The online Chi-squared calculators show **p-value** of **0.0217** represents the probability of observing the obtained results, or something more extreme, assuming that the null hypothesis (no association between financial education and budget adherence) is true. Since this p-value is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05, it indicates that the observed association is statistically significant and unlikely due to random chance. Therefore, this provides strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, affirming that participation in financial education is significantly related to better budget adherence in wedding spending.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this dissertation provide compelling evidence that **pre-marital financial education** significantly influences wedding spending behavior among engaged couples. The data reveal that couples who received financial education demonstrated **greater budget adherence**, with a mean percentage deviation of **2.05%**, compared to **7.29%** among those without such education. This suggests that financial literacy equips individuals with the tools to plan, monitor, and control their wedding expenses more effectively.

The **Chi-squared test** further supports this conclusion, revealing a statistically significant association ($p = 0.0217$) between financial education and budget adherence categories. Couples with financial education were more likely to fall within or under budget, while those without were disproportionately represented in the “significantly over budget” category.

Several factors may explain this outcome:

- **Knowledge and Skills:** Financial education likely enhances budgeting skills, awareness of financial limits, and the ability to prioritize spending.
- **Behavioral Change:** Educated couples may develop more disciplined financial habits, such as tracking expenses and resisting impulsive purchases.
- **Communication:** Financial education may improve financial communication between partners, leading to shared goals and coordinated decision-making.

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- **Stress Reduction:** Couples with financial education reported lower financial stress, suggesting that preparedness contributes to emotional well-being during wedding planning.

These findings align with prior research, including Lusardi & Mitchell (2014), who emphasized the role of financial literacy in promoting sound financial practices. Similarly, Archuleta et al. (2011) highlighted the stress associated with wedding expenses, which this dissertation confirms can be mitigated through financial education.

Moreover, the results underscore the importance of integrating financial education into **pre-marital counseling programs**. By equipping couples with financial knowledge and tools before marriage, such programs can foster responsible financial behavior, reduce stress, and promote long-term marital stability.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the dissertation. The sample size was relatively small (30 couples), and the quality and depth of financial education varied among participants. Additionally, cultural and emotional factors influencing wedding spending were not deeply explored, though they likely play a significant role.

In conclusion, the discussion highlights that financial education is not merely a technical skill but a relational and emotional asset that supports couples in navigating one of the most financially demanding events of their early married life. Future research should explore the long-term impact of financial education on marital satisfaction and financial health, as well as the role of emotional and cultural influences in spending behavior.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

FINDINGS:

The findings of this dissertation provide compelling evidence that **pre-marital financial education** plays a significant role in shaping couples' wedding spending behavior. Couples who received financial education demonstrated **greater budget adherence**, with a lower mean percentage deviation (2.05%) compared to those without financial education (7.29%). This suggests that financial literacy equips individuals with the tools to plan, monitor, and control their wedding expenses more effectively.

The **Chi-squared test** further supports this conclusion, revealing a statistically significant association ($p = 0.0217$) between financial education and budget adherence categories. Couples with financial education were more likely to fall within or under budget, while those without were disproportionately represented in the "significantly over budget" category.

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- **Communication:** Financial education may improve financial communication between partners, leading to shared goals and coordinated decision-making.
- **Stress Reduction:** Couples with financial education reported lower financial stress, suggesting that preparedness contributes to emotional well-being during wedding planning.

COMPARISON WITH PRIOR STUDIES:

Lusardi & Mitchell (2014) – Financial Literacy and Sound Financial Practices

My dissertation supports Lusardi & Mitchell's assertion that financial literacy leads to better financial outcomes. Couples who received financial education in my sample showed significantly better budget adherence and lower financial stress. This aligns with their findings that financially literate individuals are more likely to budget effectively and avoid debt traps.

My finding: Mean budget deviation was only **2.05%** for financially educated couples vs. **7.29%** for others.

Lusardi & Mitchell: Financial literacy improves budgeting, saving, and debt management.

Potrich et al. (2015) – Financial Literacy and Individual Factors

Potrich et al. emphasized that financial literacy is influenced by individual factors and leads to better financial behavior. My dissertation adds a relational dimension to this by showing that **couples** benefit from shared financial education, not just individuals. It also reinforces the idea that education impacts behavior, especially in high-stakes financial decisions like weddings.

My finding: Financial education correlated with lower overspending and better budget tracking.

Potrich et al.: Financial literacy improves financial behavior across diverse populations.

Archuleta et al. (2011) – Financial Stress in Newlyweds

Archuleta et al. found that financial stress is common among newlyweds, especially when wedding expenses are high. My dissertation confirms this but also shows that financial education can **mitigate** this stress. Couples with financial education reported **lower stress levels**, suggesting that preparedness reduces anxiety.

My finding: Financially educated couples reported lower stress and fewer loans.

Archuleta et al.: Wedding expenses are a major source of financial stress.

Stanley et al. (2006) – Premarital Counseling and Marital Success

Stanley et al. highlighted the benefits of premarital counseling, including financial discussions. My dissertation builds on this by showing that **integrating financial education** into such counseling can improve wedding planning outcomes. This supports the idea that early financial conversations contribute to marital stability.

My finding: Financial education before marriage improves budget adherence and confidence.

Stanley et al.: Premarital counseling improves marital quality and stability.

Gaps Identified in Literature vs. My Contribution

My dissertation addresses several gaps:

- **Behavioral mechanisms:** I have shown how education translates into budget adherence.
- **Financial communication:** My findings imply that educated couples may communicate better about finances.
- **Cultural and emotional factors:** While not deeply explored, my discussion acknowledges their influence.

IMPLICATIONS:

The results of this dissertation have several important implications for individuals, educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals working with couples:

Practical Implications for Couples

- **Improved Financial Preparedness:** The dissertation shows that couples who undergo financial education are more likely to adhere to their wedding budgets. This suggests that such education can help couples avoid unnecessary debt and start their married life on a stronger financial footing.
- **Reduced Financial Stress:** Financially educated couples reported lower levels of stress related to wedding expenses. This implies that financial literacy can contribute to better emotional well-being during a typically high-pressure life event.

Educational Implications

- **Curriculum Development:** Institutions offering pre-marital counseling or adult education can incorporate structured financial literacy modules. Topics such as budgeting, saving, and debt management should be emphasized, especially in the context of major life events like weddings.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Financial education programs can be tailored to address the specific needs of engaged couples, including cultural expectations, emotional spending, and family dynamics.

Policy Implications

- **Public Health and Financial Policy:** Governments and NGOs can promote financial literacy as a preventive strategy to reduce household debt and financial stress. Subsidized or free financial education programs for couples could be a cost-effective public policy intervention.
- **Integration into Marriage Registration Processes:** Authorities could consider offering optional financial education workshops as part of the marriage registration process, especially in regions where wedding-related debt is a growing concern.

Implications for Mental Health and Counseling

- **Holistic Pre-Marital Counseling:** Mental health professionals can integrate financial discussions into relationship counseling. Since financial stress is a known contributor to marital conflict, early intervention through education can enhance relationship satisfaction and stability.
- **Addressing Emotional Spending:** Therapists and counselors can help couples explore the emotional drivers behind wedding spending and develop healthier coping strategies.

Research Implications

- **Foundation for Future Studies:** This dissertation provides a framework for future research on financial behavior in couples. It highlights the need to explore not just financial outcomes but also the psychological and relational dimensions of financial education.
- **Cross-Cultural and Longitudinal Studies:** The findings encourage further investigation into how cultural norms and long-term financial outcomes are influenced by early financial education.

LIMITATIONS:

Sample Size: With only 30 couples, the generalizability of the findings is limited. A larger sample could provide more robust insights.

Variability in Education Quality: The type, duration, and depth of financial education programs varied among participants, potentially affecting outcomes.

Impact of Financial Education on Wedding Spending Behavior

Cultural and Emotional Influences: Wedding spending is often influenced by cultural norms, family expectations, and emotional desires, which may override financial planning. Despite these limitations, the dissertation aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of financial literacy in promoting responsible financial behavior. It also opens avenues for further exploration into the **psychosocial dimensions** of financial decision-making in the context of weddings.

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

While this dissertation provides valuable insights into the relationship between financial education and wedding spending behavior, it also opens several avenues for future research:

Longitudinal Impact of Financial Education

Future studies could track couples over time to assess how pre-marital financial education influences not just wedding spending, but **long-term financial behaviors**, such as saving, investing, and debt management. This would help determine whether the benefits of financial education persist beyond the wedding phase.

Emotional and Psychological Dimensions

Research could explore the **emotional drivers** behind wedding spending, such as social comparison, cultural expectations, and identity expression. Understanding how financial education interacts with these emotional factors could lead to more holistic interventions.

Cultural and Socioeconomic Variations

Wedding spending behavior is deeply influenced by **cultural norms and socioeconomic status**. Future research could examine how financial education impacts couples from different cultural backgrounds, income levels, and geographic regions, especially in countries where weddings are major social events.

Quality and Type of Financial Education

Not all financial education is created equal. Studies could compare the effectiveness of different **delivery methods** (e.g., workshops, online courses, counseling) and **content depth** to identify which formats yield the most positive outcomes in wedding budgeting.

Role of Financial Communication

Investigating how couples **communicate about finances**—before and during wedding planning—could provide insights into the behavioral mechanisms that link financial education to budget adherence. This could include studying conflict resolution, shared decision-making, and financial transparency.

Integration with Technology

Future research could explore how **digital tools** (e.g., budgeting apps, financial planning platforms) enhance or complement financial education. Understanding the role of technology in promoting responsible wedding spending could inform the design of more accessible interventions.

Impact on Relationship Satisfaction

It would be valuable to explore whether financial education and responsible wedding spending correlate with **relationship satisfaction and stability**. This could help position financial literacy as a key component of healthy relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings and limitations of this dissertation, the following recommendations are proposed:

Integrate Financial Education into Pre-Marital Counseling

Counseling programs should include modules on budgeting, saving, debt management, and financial goal setting.

This integration can prepare couples for not only wedding expenses but also long-term financial planning.

Standardize Financial Education Programs

Develop structured, evidence-based financial education curricula tailored for engaged couples.

Ensure consistency in content delivery across workshops, online platforms, and counseling sessions.

Promote Financial Communication Between Partners

Encourage couples to discuss financial expectations, priorities, and limitations openly.

Tools like joint budgeting apps or guided financial planning sessions can facilitate this process.

Expand Research Scope

Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples, covering various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Longitudinal research could assess the long-term financial outcomes of couples who received financial education.

Address Emotional and Cultural Factors

Financial education should acknowledge and incorporate cultural sensitivities and emotional aspects of wedding planning.

Programs can include strategies for managing family expectations and balancing tradition with financial prudence.

Encourage Policy-Level Support

Government and non-profit organizations can support initiatives that offer free or subsidized financial education for couples.

Public awareness campaigns can highlight the benefits of financial literacy in marriage preparation.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the impact of pre-marital financial education on wedding spending behavior among 30 couples. The findings reveal a clear pattern: couples who received financial education demonstrated significantly better budget adherence and reported lower financial stress compared to those who did not. The statistical analysis, including a Chi-squared test, confirmed a meaningful association between financial education and budget adherence, with a p-value of 0.0217 indicating statistical significance. These results underscore the value of financial literacy in preparing couples for one of the most financially demanding events in their early married life. Financial education appears to empower couples to set realistic budgets, monitor expenses, and make informed decisions—ultimately reducing the likelihood of overspending and post-wedding financial strain.

Impact of Financial Education on Wedding Spending Behavior

However, the dissertation also highlights the complexity of wedding-related financial decisions, which are often influenced by emotional, cultural, and social factors. While financial education provides a strong foundation, its effectiveness may be moderated by these external influences.

Considering these findings, integrating financial education into pre-marital counseling programs emerges as a promising strategy to support couples in building a stable financial future. Even modest improvements in financial behavior during wedding planning can have long-term benefits for marital satisfaction, financial stability, and emotional well-being.

Future research should expand on this foundation by exploring the long-term effects of financial education, the role of financial communication, and the influence of cultural and emotional factors. By continuing to investigate these dimensions, scholars and practitioners can develop more comprehensive interventions that promote financial health and relationship resilience.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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