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## **A STUDY EXAMINING THE ATTITUDE OF UAE VOCATIONAL INSTITUTES GRADUATING STUDENTS TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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### **Abstract**

*Entrepreneurship is important for the economy's growth especially in the current time of recession. This paper aims to examine the attitude of graduating students of UAE vocational institutes towards entrepreneurship and also assess its influencing factors. Research highlights the ratio of graduating student intending to start their own business as the majority of Middle East population is expats and family businesses are considered to be very important in Middle Eastern economies, contributing 60% to GDP and employing over 80% of the workforce (Middle East Family Business Survey, 2016). By applying Multivariate regression analysis on the data collected from 4 vocational institutes across UAE through structured questionnaire; it is found that family experience has a significant impact on the positive attitude of graduates towards entrepreneurship. The surprising finding of this paper is that in spite of positive attitude of graduate towards entrepreneurship, their enterprise knowledge is low. Results are encouraging for future studies to compare the entrepreneurial attitude for different nationalities in private and*

*public sector. As there is less support from institutions for entrepreneurs, the findings of this research would be beneficial for the academic institutions and government to strategise initiatives for their easy access to training and financial aid.*

### **Keywords**

Entrepreneurial Attitude, Entrepreneurial Knowledge, Enterprise Family Experience

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## **1. Introduction**

Promoting entrepreneurship in the economy has become vital with the increasing pace of globalization and limited jobs available. Entrepreneurship is considered as an important driver for job creation, economic growth and reduction in youth unemployment. As per Labor Force Survey 2016 (Dubai Statistics Center), the unemployment among Emiratis (46%) and Non Emiratis (54%) are concentrated in the age group of 20-24 years. The percentage of unemployed Emiratis and Non Emiratis by educational status; university or higher is 44% and 83%. According to a report by the International Council on Security and Development and a separate study by the National Commercial Bank in Saudi Arabia unemployment rates among Emiratis stand at about 12 percent (Salama, 2018).

This area has also been highlighted by Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai circa 2012 report that 25 percent of Emirati boy's dropout before finishing high school (Salama, 2018). These dropouts are likely to enroll in the military or police. Considering these high school dropouts only 30 percent of university students are male out of which only a few graduates. On the other hand, Emiratis who by chance complete their study also prefer to join government sector as it provides job security compared to the private sector. This also undermines the entrepreneurial capacity and not creates jobs. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important for the UAE government to support entrepreneurship in vocational education as they are looking to advance paths for youth. Leaders of private and public sectors are discussing the post oil economy and economic diversification, which can only happen through development of vocational sector. For this reason, vocational training is rising in UAE as more people are appreciating its benefits.

Entrepreneurial programs through vocational institutes promote creative thinking in a student that enables them to become an effective leader and problem solver. Even, Marek Matejun (2017) research results state that levels of innovative competences are positively influenced by the entrepreneurial courses. Students are more likely to have definite business plans to implement their innovative ideas in their own companies. By providing vocational training and educating

students regarding entrepreneurship can be most effective in developing future entrepreneurs. Fresh graduates who are looking for career opportunities can find entrepreneurship as a valuable choice. As supported by GEM 2016 report, percentage of the adult population between the ages of 18 and 64 years believe that entrepreneurship is a good career choice as it provides high status of living along with lot of positive media attention in UAE. In addition to this, Vocational institutes help to reduce the skill gap by providing apprenticeships and technical education facilities which are helpful in reducing the youth unemployment gap. Moreover, they are vital in changing the attitude of graduating students towards self-employment, building basis of entrepreneurship in UAE.

## **2. Research Objective**

The main aim of the paper is to evaluate the attitude of graduating students of vocational institutes of UAE towards entrepreneurship and identifying the factors influencing it at major scale. The research attempts to find the reasons of student's attraction towards being self-employed and whether students are ready to face entrepreneurial challenge in terms to vocational education and training.

## **3. Literature Review**

UAE is considered as an emerging market which makes it an ideal place for entrepreneurship. With the constant flow of new inhabitants from every part of the world, new markets are constantly opening. As per GEM report 2016-2017, UAE is ranked 9th out of 61 Countries for Entrepreneurship a good career choice. However, the serious challenges to the Arab communities like the rest of the world are not limited to poverty, disease, illiteracy and violence but also presence of ambitious, well-educated young people. As the government is focusing on economic diversification, which can actively be done by building young entrepreneurs' thus vocational training is rising in UAE (The National Newspaper, 2017). The Nigerian government also realized the impact that entrepreneurship may have on the economy and would help economy to drift away from poverty and many other social issues. Therefore their emphasis is more on entrepreneurial education and training. The educational programs in HEI's curriculum help students with skills that enable them to enter into entrepreneurial ventures, this in return result in self-reliance reduce unemployment through creation of more jobs (Tony, 2016).

Entrepreneurship today and a for a long time now in 21st century is seen as a tool for economic growth leading to the evolvement of the new field of education in business called

Entrepreneurial Studies or Entrepreneurship (Arthur, Hisrich and Cabrera, 2012). There is difference between Entrepreneurship and Business Management Courses. Entrepreneurial Education deals with Commencement of new business, and business management studies comprises of Management of an already existing business aiming at sales, profitability and growth. While entrepreneurial education aims at imparting education on entrepreneurship through a practical approach via its implementation itself yet the educational framework for promoting the entrepreneurial spirit is away from being satisfactory (Dutta, 2012). This type of education is required not only for self-employment also for empowering economic growth to look at the bigger picture. These entrepreneurial educational courses increase the potential in entrepreneurs for establishing a successful venture (Ahamed and Shahid, 2013).

It has been discovered through studies that “entrepreneurs are not born but made through their environment and experiences as they develop and learn, being impacted by guardian, mentors, tutors, instructor’s role model during their development process” (Matlay, H. 2008). The main purpose of vocational education is to prepare graduates with relevant skills and develop attitude towards self-employment or job. The students are enriched with skills and given on the job trainings with networking opportunities for future job prospects. The experiences gained through these trainings help students to get know-how about two basic features of entrepreneurship; the basic operations of a business and to familiarize themselves with the business environment.

Vocational educators believe that a business startup is an outcome of natural outgrowth of vocational skills training. A comparative analysis study conducted in Delhi and National Capital region (NCR), India on entrepreneurship education in Business schools with an emphasis on ones that owned an entrepreneurship cells suggested a model that enhances program delivery of entrepreneurial education (Waraich and Chaturvedi,2015). As per the researchers Development of entrepreneurship requires three conditions: A standard of young graduates with a great business sense who are developed through Process of practical insight into business education; An incubator that supports the birth of new business ideas and last but not the least government initiatives and support in the form of business policies that promote entrepreneurship and its implementation.

Researchers in United States (Guo, Chen & Yu, 2016) likewise also studied the impact of college education in self-employment and entrepreneurial opportunities and their income level through the current population survey of data ranging from the year 1989 to 2011. The result

concluded the students or graduates with college education were more probable and developed an attitude of owning a business than those who didn't have. Entrepreneurs with college education earned more annual income than others without education. College education turned effective in the case of Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs compared to other ethnic groups. Women with the college education were more likely to be self-employed and earning more than others without college education however the influence of education was stronger on men. Education also plays a significant part in entrepreneurial activity, stating that it is critical to attract the youth towards entrepreneurship, especially as current industrial trends are towards a knowledge-based environment. It is believed that long-term supply of well-educated and qualified entrepreneurs shall lead to creation of a strong modern society therefore it is important to convince and encourage students towards entrepreneurship as opposed to a large organization.

In addition to this, a study conducted in Malaysia (Shamsudin et.al, 2015) aimed to examine the outcomes achieved on the strategic plan intended to develop entrepreneurship in higher education industry aimed at promoting entrepreneurial education In Malaysia. The outcomes achieved were measured against the KPI established by ministry of education. The efforts taken by Malaysian government to promote entrepreneurship education was sufficient yet some more improvements were required as far as higher education institutions graduates were concerned as the favorable environment and network for the development of entrepreneurship was not well achieved. Therefore, a revision of the curriculum, content, policies and program on entrepreneurship through the combined efforts of ministry of education and HEI was recommended. It was discovered that students are risk averse and the fear of failure has been a hurdle for them to board on an empire-building track. Also, Aleciane da Silva and Roach. M. in their study on Motivations, business planning, and risk management: entrepreneurship among university students (2017) indicated that the entrepreneurial motivations of potential student entrepreneurs were higher but were cautious about managing business risk.(Antonites and Wordsworth 2009). Andra (2015) study shows that entrepreneurship has been a major interest of university students in UAE however they lack in detail knowledge in implementation of entrepreneurial idea with respect to managing business risk. This is also highlighted by GEM 2016-17 report that UAE is ranked on 1<sup>st</sup> out of 64 countries for fear of failure of business as entrepreneurs in population aged 18 – 64 years.

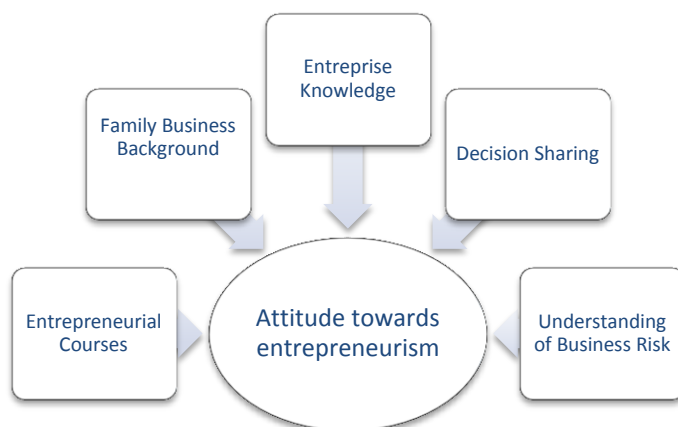
In a research by UrveVenesaar, on Students' Attitudes and Intentions toward Entrepreneurship at Tallinn University of Technology (2006), found that 60% of the students were

motivated to start their business through curriculum and entrepreneurial studies, however, the knowledge that student had in specialties was insufficient and wanted to learn more about business planning, training in taxation, information about enterprise support and procedures for starting a business, business law, application of accounting programmers and foreign languages. Moreover, Sanaa Ashour (2016), in her research highlighted in her study on UAE that about 38% and 23.3% expressed an interest in becoming entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. Even though the students are interested to be entrepreneurs there is limited education and training in specialized fields such as social entrepreneurship education which leads to a drive–preparedness gap. This area needs immediate attention so as to prepare UAE’s next generation for economic diversification.

In order to design effective self-employment policies and entrepreneurship initiatives by policy makers it is vital to identify what influences entrepreneurship with regard to scrutinizing the factors influencing attitude towards entrepreneurship. Many studies find Robinson and Haynes model of entrepreneur attitude orientation scale an important tool (Ammal and Mathi 2014; Paramond 2004). These studies revealed that a student career choice as an entrepreneur is affected by a number of factors including family, business background, personality traits, innovativeness, self-efficiency, risk-taking and independence. Those students who come from families having entrepreneurship or business background are positively inclined towards an entrepreneurial career (Hatala 2005). Another motivating factor in developing entrepreneurial attitude was mentioned by Darriel B. Mendoza (2015) in his research that there is significant relationship between students’ personality traits and their entrepreneurial intentions. It was observed that to enable an individual to become an entrepreneur factors such as confidence and effective connections with established entrepreneurs is also very essential. A study of networking ability and innovativeness among university students in North Central Nigeria by Abu Amodu, A & Aka, A. (2017) found a strong correlation between networking ability and innovativeness, which leads to entrepreneurship. And based on their findings it was suggested that networking ability and activities should be incorporated into the circular and encouraged by the institutes/universities, governments and policy makers, specifically now that there is an increased need for entrepreneurship to reduce youth unemployment.

Based on the above discussion, this paper has developed a framework as given in Fig. 1, highlighting the factors affecting the attitude towards entrepreneurship. A similar study was

conducted by Ibrahim et al. (2017) based on Oman using the same predictors. However, the results may vary on the basis of the economic growth of both the countries.



**Figure 1:** Framework for examining attitude of graduate students towards entrepreneurship

This study examines the attitude of UAE graduates of vocational institutes towards entrepreneurship. Based on the research objectives, the formulated hypotheses are as following:

- H1. Entrepreneurial courses have positive impact on the attitude towards entrepreneurship
- H2. Family background has positive impact on the attitude towards entrepreneurship
- H3: Decision sharing has positive impact on the attitude towards entrepreneurship
- H4: Understanding of business risk has positive impact on the attitude towards entrepreneurship
- H5. Enterprise Knowledge has positive impact on the attitude towards entrepreneurship

#### **4. Method and Sampling Framework**

For this paper, primary and secondary research method has been used to assess the attitude of recently graduated and graduating students towards entrepreneurship and the factors influencing it. Through literature review, the secondary part has been covered while first hand primary data has been collected with structured questionnaire. The survey sample consisted of students who had recently graduated in addition to those who were in their last semester of business education from 4 vocational institutes of UAE. The selected institutes are providing same BTEC higher national diploma in business from Pearson and the students were selected on the basis that they had completed their entrepreneurial courses and were potential future entrepreneurs.

Data was collected through random sampling scheme from total **125 students** with the support of structured questionnaire. Data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed using

the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS version 19). The survey tool demonstrated a reliability of **0.875**, based on Cornbach's Alpha. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with a sample of 10 respondents. The five-point Likert scale being: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" and "strongly agree" was taken to measure understanding of business risk and attitude towards entrepreneurship. For the other two variables such as knowledge of enterprise and decision sharing was measured on Likert scale of "none", "some", "great".

The Bivariate Pearson Correlation is used to measure the correlations among the variables. Correlation technique is helpful in this research to measure how strongly the variables are related to each other and the degree of association between them. With this multivariate regression was used to determine the key factors influencing the attitude of students in UAE towards entrepreneurship.

## **5. Main Findings**

Results of the survey, comprising of 125 respondents with equal ratio of male (63) and female (62) participants revealed that there is no discrimination in gender towards acquisition of business education, thus both segments are active on equal terms in vocational institutes of UAE. About 69% of respondents were under graduate i.e. studying in their last semester of business program and 31% of respondents were those who had recently graduated and completed their business studies program. Majority of the respondents had studied entrepreneurial courses during their educational tenure and 58% of these respondents indicated their occupation preference to be self-employed, either start a business or to join their family business. Further, through cross tabulation between gender and occupation preference, it showed that majority of the male participants were interested in self-employment. Moreover, cross tabulation between occupation preference and family business background also exposed that 58% of respondents belonging to family business background were likely to join their own family business.

## **6. Data Analysis: Bivariate Pearson Correlation**

The bivariate Pearson Correlation is used to measure the correlations among the variables, as bivariate Pearson Correlation actively measures the strength and direction of linear relationships between pairs of continuous variables. Correlation technique is helpful in this research to measure how strongly the variables are related to each other and the degree of association between them. Such as Attitude towards entrepreneurship relation with independent variables;



entrepreneurial courses, family background, enterprise knowledge, decision sharing and understanding of business risk.

**Table 1:** Correlation between Attitude towards Entrepreneurism, Entrepreneurial course and Family experience

		Entrepreneurial courses	Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Family Experience
Entrepreneurial courses	Pearson Correlation	1	.255**	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.026
Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Pearson Correlation	.255**	1	.756**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.000
Family Experience	Pearson Correlation	.199*	.736**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

The above Table 1 demonstrates that attitude towards entrepreneurship and prior family experience has a significant linear relationship ( $p < .001$ ). The direction of the relationship is positive and they tend to increase together. The strength of the association is high as the correlation coefficient is 0.756, which shows that attitude towards entrepreneurship is high if the students belong from a family business background.

Also, Attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial courses has linear relationship with positive direction of the relationship, though the strength of magnitude of these two variables is comparatively low with Pearson correlation value of 0.255 as compared to correlation with family business background.

**Table 2:** Correlation between Attitude towards Entrepreneurism and Enterprise Knowledge

		Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Enterprise development ideas	Basics of starting up an enterprise	Enterprise financing	Conducting feasibility studies	Insurance and tax laws of an enterprise
Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Pearson Correlation	1	.224*	.087	.033	.079	.223*

m	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012	.336	.715	.382	.012
Enterprise development ideas	Pearson Correlation	.224*	1	.308**	.336**	.299**	.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012		.000	.000	.001	.000
Basics of starting up an enterprise	Pearson Correlation	.087	.308**	1	.122	.405**	.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.336	.000		.176	.000	.277
Enterprise financing	Pearson Correlation	.033	.336**	.122	1	.393**	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.715	.000	.176		.000	.001
Conducting feasibility studies	Pearson Correlation	.079	.299**	.405**	.393**	1	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.382	.001	.000	.000		.000
Insurance and tax laws of an enterprise	Pearson Correlation	.223*	.399**	.098	.304**	.404**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000	.277	.001	.000	
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

In Table 2; there is positive relationship between the variables, attitude towards entrepreneurship and enterprise knowledge as all the figures are positive. From the determinants of Enterprise knowledge, enterprise development ideas and insurance, tax laws knowledge show significant relation with attitude towards entrepreneurship. However the strength between the correlations is significantly low.

**Table 3:** Correlation between Attitude towards Entrepreneurism and Decision Sharing

		Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Close family	Close relative	Close friends	Close colleagues at college/university
Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Pearson Correlation	1	.075	.147	.028	.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.409	.101	.757	.906
Close family	Pearson Correlation	.075	1	.495**	.105	-.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.409		.000	.243	.002
Close relative	Pearson Correlation	.147	.495**	1	.196*	.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.101	.000		.028	.969
Close friends	Pearson Correlation	.028	.105	.196*	1	.391**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.757	.243	.028		.000
Close colleagues at college/university	Pearson Correlation	.011	-.272**	.004	.391**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.906	.002	.969	.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 3 shows that the relationship between decision sharing and the attitude is positive but not significant, this indicates that attitude is not much affected by the decision sharing factors and magnitude of correlation is not significant.

**Table 4:** Correlation between Attitude towards Entrepreneurism and Understanding of Business Risk

		Attitude towards Entrepreneurism	Creative ideas and skills to be	Anticipate the probability	Leadership and communication	Problem solving	Networking and making	Basics of starting

		m	an entrepreneur	y of success for the business	n skills		profession al contacts	a busines s
Attitude towards Entrepreneuris m	Pearson Correlatio n	1	.192*	.105	.233**	.258**	.171	.073
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.032	.245	.009	.004	.056	.417
Creative ideas and skills to be an entrepreneur	Pearson Correlatio n	.192*	1	.308**	.518**	.460**	.341**	.268**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.032		.000	.000	.000	.000	.003
Anticipate the probability of success for the business	Pearson Correlatio n	.105	.308**	1	.145	.270**	.191*	.290**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.245	.000		.107	.002	.033	.001
Leadership and communicatio n skills	Pearson Correlatio n	.233**	.518**	.145	1	.594**	.325**	.070
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.009	.000	.107		.000	.000	.438
Problem solving	Pearson Correlatio n	.258**	.460**	.270**	.594**	1	.497**	.136
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.004	.000	.002	.000		.000	.131
Networking and making professional contacts	Pearson Correlatio n	.171	.341**	.191*	.325**	.497**	1	.153
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.056	.000	.033	.000	.000		.089
Basics of starting a business	Pearson Correlatio n	.073	.268**	.290**	.070	.136	.153	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.417	.003	.001	.438	.131	.089	
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed).								
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								

The above table 4 displays that Attitude towards entrepreneurship; leadership skill and problem solving skill in business risk have a statistically significant linear relationship. The relationship is positive and the magnitude of the association is moderate.

## 7. Data Analysis: Regression Analysis

To test the relationship between Attitude towards Entrepreneurism (dependent variable) and Entrepreneurial courses, family experience, decision sharing, understanding of business risk and knowledge (independent variables), multivariate linear regression was applied. Out of the five hypothesis, three were statistically significant in the proposed direction, while two were not significant. The results are summarized below:

- The first hypothesis measured the impact of Entrepreneurial Courses (EC) on the Attitude towards Entrepreneurism (ATE). EC was found to have positive impact on the ATE with  $\gamma=0.062$ , p value  $0.004 < 0.01$  therefore H1 was supported.
- The second hypothesis examined the impact of Family Experience (FE) on the Attitude towards Entrepreneurship (ATE). FE has a positive impact on the ATE with  $\gamma=0.54$ , p value  $0.000 < 0.01$  thus H2 was supported.
- The third hypothesis examined the impact between ATE and Decision Sharing (DS). DS with family, close friends, or colleagues has no impact on the ATE, with  $\gamma=0.02$  and the P-value of  $0.614 > 0.05$  so H3 was not supported.
- The fourth hypothesis measured the impact between understanding of business risk and the ATE. The understanding of the business risk had a significant impact on the attitude of graduates with  $\gamma=0.065$  and the P-value  $0.004 < 0.05$ , so H4 is supported.
- The fifth and last hypothesis tested the impact of Enterprise Knowledge (EK) and ATE. The EK has no impact on the ATE with  $\gamma = 0.079$  and the P-value  $0.079 > 0.05$ . Thus, H5 is not supported.

**Table 5: Hierarchical Linear Regression**

	Dependent variable Attitude towards Entrepreneurism		
	$\gamma$	Constant	P Value

<i>Independent Variable</i>			
<b>Entrepreneurial Courses</b>	0.065**	2.00	0.004
<b>Family Experience</b>	0.54**	2.057	0.000
<b>Decision Sharing</b>	0.022	2.654	0.614
<b>Understanding Business Risk</b>	0.065	1.698	0.004
<b>Enterprise Knowledge</b>	0.079	2.419	0.079

\*P < 0.05; \*\* P < 0.01

## 8. Data Analysis : Mean Analysis

**Table 6: Enterprise Knowledge**

		Enterprise development ideas	Basics of starting up an enterprise	Enterprise financing	Conducting feasibility studies	Insurance and tax laws of an enterprise
N	Valid	125	125	125	125	125
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.12	1.35	.87	.97	.74

Table 6 shows that the level of knowledge of graduates in aspects of detail is low, coming to 1.01 as a whole. The minimum level of knowledge was expressed in the areas of conducting feasibility studies, insurance and tax laws of an enterprise and enterprise financing. These are the weak areas where students require knowledge in order to be strengthened for future business career.

**Table 7: Decision Sharing**

		Close family approves the decision to start a business	Close relative approve the decision	Close friends approve the decision	Close colleagues at college/university approve the decision
N	Valid	125	125	125	125
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.62	.96	1.02	.84

Table 7 demonstrates that the level of decision sharing of the graduates with close family, or close relatives, friends or colleagues at colleges is limited (the total average is 1.11). The highest impact amongst all variables comes from close family (1.62), followed by close friends (1.02) as compared to relatives and colleagues.

**Table 8: Understanding of Business Risk**

		I have satisfactory levels of creative ideas and skills to be an entrepreneur	I can anticipate the probability of success for the business	I have satisfactory levels of leadership and communication skills	I have satisfactory levels of problem solving	I have satisfactory level of networking and making professional contacts	I know the basics of starting a business and keeping it working smoothly
N	Valid	125	125	125	125	125	124
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mean		2.75	2.70	2.82	2.52	2.58	2.81

Table 8 displays that the graduate students' overall knowledge of business risk is moderate. The average understanding of business risk ranges from a minimum of 2.52 for having satisfactory level of problem solving skill, to the highest of 2.82 for having satisfactory level of leadership and communication skills.

## 9. Discussion

The study has highlighted the positive attitude of UAE students toward entrepreneurship with no discrimination of gender, both males and females tend to be an entrepreneur, this can be due to limited job opportunities and salary biasedness on the basis of nationality in UAE. Government should exploit this opportunity and come up with entrepreneurial initiatives for the graduates including quicker access to small loans, trainings and other business startup support in terms of legal documentation.

The interesting fact revealed in this study is that despite of the graduate's attitude towards entrepreneurship, their knowledge of enterprise is low. This may be due to lack of specialized entrepreneurial courses option in the universities. Although, the ministry of education initiated the implementation of entrepreneurship and innovation classes in federal and private universities to encourage graduates which are based on the basics of entrepreneurship to entice the graduating students (Swan, 2016). However, they are not taught about the detailed skills and other aspects such as feasibility studies, taxation and legal requirements to start up the business. In UAE, more than 800 approved vocational institutes are offering a broad range of courses which is quite larger than the registered regular universities (Technical and Vocational Education and Training KHDA, 2018). To increase the enterprise knowledge in graduating students, specialized courses can be offered on legal aspects of entrepreneurship in these vocational institutes.

The study also examined different factors which can influence the attitude towards entrepreneurship. Out of five factors being considered, the family experience in entrepreneurship has a significant impact on the attitude. Graduates with family business background reflected high attitude towards entrepreneurship. Since the basis of business is formed and they have seen their fathers and forefathers in the same field, they are more prone to be an entrepreneur. The findings align with most of the studies addressing family experience (W. Gibb Dyer et al, 1994; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2006). In UAE, majority population is expat community with only 10% UAE nationals. Among the expat community, South Asians compose the largest group (58%) followed by 17% Asians and 8.5% Westerns (World Population Review, 2018). Majority South Asians have their small family businesses and their off springs are likely to follow these businesses. Due to which they prefer to send their children to acquire business studies who are most likely to bring entrepreneurial changes to their existing family business.

The study also found the positive relation between the entrepreneurial courses and the attitude towards entrepreneurship. The graduating students who have studied the basics of entrepreneurship reflected higher interest in entrepreneurship. With the ease of online business, easy entry and less capital requirement, students are ready to experience, such as creating personal store through shopify, Facebook etc. This result is aligning with the findings of Fayolle and Galley (2013) who concludes the positive influence of entrepreneurship education program on the attitude towards entrepreneurship. Lee and Wong (2003) also found the positive relation between the entrepreneurship education and the new business ventures. The research conducted on the entrepreneurship courses being offered in these institutes revealed that these courses are revolving



around the basics and requires further specialization. It can be broken down into further entrepreneurial areas such as feasibility analysis, taxation and insurances etc. which can provide practical insight to the students. Also, Sanaa Ashour (2016), in her research highlighted that students expressed an interest in becoming entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs however lacked proper training in being social entrepreneurship.

Further, understanding of business risk is also found to be correlated with the attitude towards entrepreneurship. Graduates with better understanding of business risk are more prone towards entrepreneurship. The finding is consistent with the Belwal et al. (2015); Ibrahim et al. (2017) who revealed that the students interested in starting a new business is highly dependent on their willingness to take risks. Moreover, have understanding to manage risk through their problem solving, communication and leadership skills. The entrepreneurial courses can be tailored in a way to attract students and manage their perception of risk. UAE is ranked as 21<sup>st</sup> globally and it is at the top of Arab countries in terms ease of doing business (The World Bank Ease of Doing Business report, 2018). This is quite encouraging for the entrepreneurs and play vital role in reducing the risk of new business startup. Dubai Expo 2020 is also encouraging many investments which are exciting for small business incubators.

Lastly, decision sharing was found to have no impact on the attitude towards entrepreneurship. Specially, relatives and colleagues might not have a substantial influence on the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship. As entrepreneurship is based on an individual's inner drive and decision sharing with other people is limited. The result is consistent with the study of Ibrahim et al. (2017) and reflects the societal perspective of UAE.

## **10. Conclusion**

The unemployment rate of graduates is steadily increasing in UAE which is creating concern for the government to foster entrepreneurship. To sustain the economic growth, it has become vital to convert the job seekers into job creators. The overall results portrayed the positive attitude of the graduates towards the entrepreneurship however; the level of knowledge in specialized entrepreneurial areas is low. Although the ministry of Education is implementing the entrepreneurial courses in the universities, but these courses covers the basics only and do not cover the detail of legal requirements for starting a new business. To enhance the enterprise knowledge, specialized entrepreneurial courses need to be offered in the vocational institutes and the registered universities to encourage smooth startup of businesses. Angga Martha. Ery. & Agus,

(2017) supports by saying that entrepreneurship education increases students' entrepreneurial capacities in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude and motivational aspects to achieve entrepreneurial assignments. Entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial attitude directly influence the entrepreneurial intention which is indirectly built through entrepreneurial education and environment given by the institutes. Therefore, another way of encouraging entrepreneurial attitude can be through networking between inter colleges and institutes. Also, fostering institutes environment through lecturers involvement to attract students to entrepreneurial activities (Suhaiza Ngah and Rosnizza Ramlan (2015). As it will play important role in encouraging students to start their ventures, moreover centralized platforms should be created where students in the form of groups are encouraged to compete and present their plans while ending up with best plan to have financial and guided support for its implementation. Government can support these business incubators to be positive career for the graduating students. Moreover, government and institutes can facilitate networking activities between students and role models to encourage innovativeness and idea generation. Also, on national level government can create apprenticeship platforms to provide industry experience (Israel-Regha, Mercy N 2015).

UAE is ranked at 1 out of 64 countries for the fear of failure in doing business (Gems report 2016-17). Thus, fostering entrepreneurial activities requires vital participation of the government, since they are one's who can create conducive business environment with reduced business risk. The UAE government is successful in making entrepreneurship an attracting career with the 9<sup>th</sup> ranking among all. However, they need to work towards increasing the specialized entrepreneurial knowledge among the graduates which can be done by offering courses in legal affairs in entrepreneurship, insurance and taxes, feasibility etc.

### **10.1 Research Limitations**

Though this paper reflected the factors that influence the attitude towards entrepreneurship, however the data is limited to only graduates of 4 private vocational institutes. The paper also not discuss about different students entrepreneurial attitude of public and private institutes.

### **10.2 Scope of Future Research**

This research can lay foundation for other researches that can be conducted in both public and private sector to highlight the comparison. The future research can also take into account the impact of different factors on attitude, on the basis of nationality as UAE is a country with diversified nationalities from all around the world. Also, a study can be done to identify the

entrepreneurial intentions based on gender, as females usually intend to go for small scale / home based business based on the family support and other social factors.

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