

The Relationship between Attitudes and Students Intention to Enter the Vocation Education and Training in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to examine the internal and external effect of students' attitude towards the intention to enter the vocational education in the UAE through examining the different factors of attitude such as social, individual, demographic and organization. Because of the inconsistent results, for further investigation, a new research has established through introducing new and different variables that may better explain the nature of that relationships and issues. In the literature, many theories have suggested that link between variables such as Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Questionnaires were distributed to 700 students. 549 questionnaires were returned and using in the analysis using SPSS software version 18.0 through descriptive and inferential statistics. In addition, Independent T-test and Scheffe' test were used to test and hypothesized the hypotheses. So, the results of this study showed that there are significant differences in the parents' responses between Social factors of vocational education according to their gender and the region either urban or rural. In another hands, the result of the students was found to have significant differences of the attitudes and importance in rural and urban regions. In addition to that, all parents either in government or private sectors agreed the importance and vocational education future for their children. Moreover, the culture in both sectors is differently seen by society in terms of the vocational education. This study also supported the premises of the TRA, TPB, and SCT theories by reaffirming the importance of the study's variables for supporting the intention of the students towards the vocational education.

Keywords: United Arab Emirates, vocational education attitude scale, technical and vocational education and training, vocational education and training, career guidance, theory of reasoned action

1. Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is one of the Arabian countries that is located on the Arabian Gulf. The area of the UAE is 83,600 square kilometers, and the total populations in 2010 was 8,264,070 as claimed by the UAE Bureau of Statistics (Ibpus.com, 2012).

Currently, the technical and vocational arenas of learning can also be practiced at the secondary stage or post-secondary stage, and at various colleges. For example, eight secondary vocational institutes provides technical training courses in the industry and business areas for the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade male learners in the present public school co-ordination.

These technical schools are accustomed to the guidelines of the national system this is because the establishments are also a division of the government education structure. As stated by the World Development Indicators (World Bank), the unemployment rate numbers among the secondary education has somehow increased from the year 1995 with 23.0% to 42.6% in 2008. By which the unemployment rate of female is 46.7% and it is higher than the unemployment rate for the male which is at 36.4% in 2008. In addition, the third level education of the unemployment rate was 20.3% in 1995 and somehow amplified to 33.2% in 2008 (Economy, 2012).

In reference to the UAE's National Bureau of Statistics, the joblessness rate within the citizens were at 20.8% in the year of 2011 meanwhile it was 3.2% within the expatriates. The sum of both residents and expatriates overall unemployment rate was 4.6% in 2011. Nevertheless, Unemployment Rate in the United Arab Emirates diminished to 4.2% in 2012 from 4.6% in 2011. Unemployment Level in the United Arab Emirates averaged 3.12% from 1985 till 2012, attaining an all-time high of 4.6% in 2011 and a marked low of 1.15% in 1985.

Unemployment Percentage in the United Arab Emirates is stated by the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates (Economics, 2013)

2. Related Literature Review

Its clear and important to say that the Vocational education is play big role in economic development in any country. Vocational education is important, and its role in economic development has been quite evident in any country. In fact, we require skillful and technicians people or blue collar of many vocations and technicalities in the labor market more than we need white collar occupations or academicians. Vocational education is at least as important as academic education, or even more important, especially when the statistical figures indicate higher unemployment rates among university graduates than among their counterparts from vocational schools or other technical intermediate community colleges (Richards, 1994). Despite the Importance of vocational education around the world, UAE has very poor rate among the world's countries. While the UAE has constructed a robust reputation as an educational hub, there persist some significant workforce supply and demand openings in several of industries counting energy and healthcare. Vocational and technical education doesn't have its rational share of the education market in the U.A.E. 8890 learners in Vocational institutes/ schools were accommodated in 24 institutes/ schools in 273312 students in the general school in 673 schools by 2013-2014 according to the Ministry of education, Education information system department.

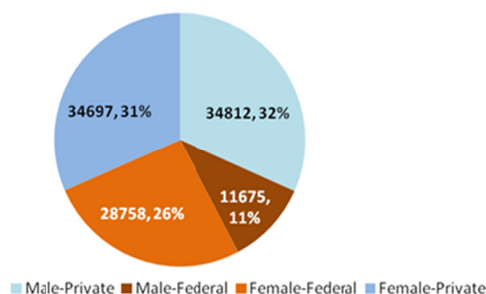


Figure 1. Distribution of enrolment by gender and type of institution in 2011 – 2012 (Interact, 2012)

2.1 The Attitude towards VET

The big difference between the Importance and usefulness of vocational education and training (VET) in most of the world and UAE shows big gap and question which needs urgent answers. VET can play major role to improve economic growth, market efficiency and social transformation. As many studies recommended that campaigns on the importance of VET programs in developing countries could increase budgetary considerations in favor of VET programs. This will lead to improve continue studying by educators in this route of education. Also identified that the school vocational program is an important issue in improving labour performance which lead to economic growth (Benson, 2013). This research will cover the awareness of important of VET to the UAE society.

In the different researches, it is found that gender-related differences between the view of students has been discovered by investigators to be at the minimum, however, there were differences in the point of view of university-bound students and other students (Henderson & Fisher, 2007; Benson, 2013; Wibisana, 1996). A main effect is on the point of view against technology based from social and gender standards (Rajput, 1988).

In high schools of the vocational education, female students had high satisfied with the skill studies given in enterprises. "Educating of the vocational education in school before starting the skill knowledge". Its necessary to Implementing this new skill of education in the school before facing the real working environment so that they can improving the quality of workforce (Üstün & Savas, 2010).

According to Bergh (1997) and Walters (1989), Male students have more positive attitude against the vocational and technical programs than the female. On the other hand, the girls have more positive point of view towards vocational education, whereby the boys hold more negative concepts towards VET programs (Rojewski and Sheng, 1993). Also found out the negative perceptions about the vocational programs are more from the male students who come from the higher socioeconomic standard (Rossetti, 1990).

2.2 Students' Intention

The intention of student as a dependent variable has been studied in different countries as will be discussed in the following chapter. However, the factors of attitude included in this study has not studied before together in any one of those countries. In addition, there is a lack of studies in student intention in the UAE. Therefore, this study is one of the important studies that can bridge the gap in the existing body of knowledge. In addition, the framework of this study is an attempt to fill the gaps in the literature by involving new variables that may affect the intention of student in UAE.

2.3 The Relationship between Attitude and Students' Intention to Enter the VET

There were many factors that affects the students point view to choose VET programs. The people surrounding them are one of the main effect; for example, the friends, siblings and parents. Also there were times that when a teacher interpersonal action can play a main role in influencing VET program courses. The students who received more uncertainty, doubts, dissatisfied admonishing and strict actions in their teacher were more prone to demonstrate more negative view to their VET course and feel less satisfied with the programs (Henderson & Fisher, 2008; AlSa'd, 2007).

According to Ryeetey, Doh, and Andoh (2011) the vocational skills in Ghana are not competitive enough for more high income jobs in the labor market as parents view on Vocational education program. Other results reported that people have less positive attitudes against the vocational education and vocational education that is not easily accepted with vocational school has a bad reputation in the society (Saavedra, 1970; Rossetti, 1990; Gilliland, 1967; McKenna & Ferrero, 1991).

There are still some parents and students who have a positive view towards VET. A few researchers found that the more helping, leadership and understanding action that the students received from the teacher's demonstration and less restrain in student freedom, the more positive students' view towards their VET programs and the programs received more satisfaction from the students (Henderson & Fisher, 2007; AbdRahman, 1986; Noncolela, 1999; Elffers & Oort, 2013; Euroborometer, 2011; Wibisana, 1996; Benson, 2013).

Higher educated parents have no impact on attitudes against education. Somehow school background and students are having higher positive attitudes. The gender is also playing more important influence than the school profile (Szyellowski, 1987).

Ghanini (1994) investigated the attitudes of tenth grade students against the vocational studies in the Jordan's public schools in Madaba district. The outcomes showed that positive view were there within the students against the vocational education. However, there were no important connection were discovered between the independent variables.

The relationship between attitude and the intention of students has been investigated in the previous studies (Henderson & Fisher, 2007; Benson, 2013; Wibisana, 1996; Rajput, 1988). However, there is still inconsistency in those results. Therefore, this study comes to fill this gap in the literature by investigating these variables with new context, the UAE, which has lacking in these types of studies.

For the purpose of investigation in this study the following hypotheses have been proposed to be tested in the following sections:

H1: There are statistical significant differences among the parents' responses toward vocational education on the context of United Arab Emirates (UAE) due to their gender.

H2: There are statistical significant differences among the students' responses toward vocational education on the context of United Arab Emirates (UAE) due to their gender.

3. Methodology

This study is a quantitative methodology approach which investigates the relationships between different variables. Sample and population of this study were from people who researched on, these are students who either participated or not in the vocational education and their parents in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). 150 numbers of students are the sample respondents which were selected. They were from the technical and vocational schools and institutions in the UAE and other 250 students who did not involved in the VET program which were from grade eight, the grade that before the grade that accept student to enter VET program (the VET schools and institutes accept students from grade nine). Two types of schools which one for boys and another for girls' students. In case of the parents, the samples of questions that were hand out to the parents whose students are involved and not involved in the VET programs were 300. The statistical analysis contains Descriptive statistics, (t) test, ANOVA test, and Scheffe' test. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 18.0 software (SPSS)

was used to analyze the proposed hypotheses.

4. Data Analysis

The questionnaires are designed to gather information and data collection about the Knowledge, Attitude/beliefs/intention, Cognition, opinions and behavior of fathers, mothers, girls, boys, VET boys, and VET girls. The statements basically are chosen carefully to measure the vocational education attitude scale (VEAS). We used serious, rigorous, valid and reliable measuring tools to ensure that the results and analysis are meaningful.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Parent's attitude

No.	The Domains	Mean*	SD	Ranking	Response degree
1	Vocational Education Importance	3.46	0.92	1	Mid
2	Social perception of vocational education	3.18	0.91	2	Mid
3	Vocational Education Future	3.16	0.31	3	Mid
	Total	3.29	0.27	-	Mid

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) in the above table shows the parents' responses on the attitudes toward vocational education on the context of United Arab Emirates (UAE) questionnaire domains were computed.

On the other hand, Table 2 Shows the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of the students' responses on the attitudes toward vocational education on the context of United Arab Emirates (UAE) questionnaire domains were computed.

Table 2. Student attitude

No.	The Domains	Mean*	SD	Ranking	Response degree
1	Vocational Education Attitudes	3.17	0.89	1	Mid
3	Vocational Education Future	3.14	0.69	2	Mid
2	Social perception of vocational education	2.95	0.65	3	Low
4	Vocational Education Importance	2.90	0.29	4	Low
	Total	3.06	0.42	-	Mid

4.2 Testing Hypotheses

Table 3 shows that there are significant differences between the means of the parents' responses for responses toward (Social perception of vocational education domain and Responses toward vocational education as whole) according to their gender in favor of females. While there aren't any significant differences between the means of the parents' responses at the rest domains.

Table 3. Parent's attitude

Domains	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-Value	Sig.
Vocational Education Importance	Male	3.46	.909	171	.127	.899
	Female	3.45	.932			
Vocational Education Future	Male	3.17	.361	171	.644	.521
	Female	3.14	.241			
Social perception of vocational education	Male	3.03	.899	171	2.557	*.011
	Female	3.38	.884			
Responses toward vocational education as whole	Male	3.25	.273	171	2.365	*.019
	Female	3.35	.261			

Table 4 shows that, there are observed differences between the means of the students' responses toward vocational education on the context of United Arab Emirates (UAE) according to their gender. To test the significant of these differences, independent samples (t) test was used as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Student attitude

Domains	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vocational Education Attitudes	Male	188	3.16	1.125
	Female	188	3.18	1.153
Social perception of vocational education	Male	188	2.92	.702
	Female	188	2.98	.595
Vocational Education Future	Male	188	3.10	.699
	Female	188	3.18	.685
Vocational Education Importance	Male	188	2.89	.256
	Female	188	2.91	.314
Responses toward vocational education as whole	Male	188	3.04	.417
	Female	188	3.08	.426

5. Discussion

As reported in the previous section, the effect of gender of parents in terms of vocational education importance, social, and future perception were examined and reported. This means that the women responded toward (social perception of vocational education domain and Responses toward vocational education as whole) is more positive than men. Therefore, the results support the proposed hypothesis of the parents' responses of social perception of vocational education according to the gender factor at 0.05 level of significance. Similarly, the results shows also the positive and significant effect of the vocational education as a whole according to gender factor This significant and positive results reflect the importance of social perception in parents' response towards the vocational education. In addition, the social perception is very important factor when dealing with vocational education that will increase the intention of students towards moving ahead to enhance their skills through education and training. Moreover, the parents' culture is dominant in terms of social factors to enhance the awareness of parents towards their children. In term of gender, it was found that female has more awareness and agreement than male which was clearly explained by the mean value (3.38 and 3.35). Female were more positive and significant than male in terms of vocation education social.

On the other hand, the results of this study showed insignificant results of the parents' vocational education importance and vocational education future. These results reflect the insignificant effect of parents' perception towards students' intention in terms of their importance and future. Also, the results showed the awareness of male than female which was very clear in the mean values (3.46 and 3.17). The non-significant results are due to many reasons. The first reason is about the low level of educations among parents that prevent them to understand the importance and the future of vocational education. The other reason is related to the culture of society in the UAE towards the vocational education and its role and importance in sustaining students' future, society and even the whole economy.

The attitude for male and female are the same toward all domains. The insignificant differences in results in the students' attitude, social perception, future, and importance of vocational education between males and females are happened because of many results. First, the level of education in schools is produced similarly and equally between male and female. Second, the government of the UAE is dealing with both genders in same level and provides the same facilities and educational instrument. Third, in the level of schools, male and female still have the same abilities and capabilities to think in the same way. In other words, there is any employment or social factors such as positions, salaries, and work place that may increase the difference of perceptions among them.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the education either general or vocational is the most important for any country to be developed. In the literature, it was acknowledged the important role of attitude factors on the intention of students to enter the VET program. In spite of that, most of these studies in western counties and few of them in the context of developing countries especially in the Middle East. This study examined the effect of individual factors, social

factors, organizational factors, and demographic factors on the students' intention to enter the VET program. The results were discussed from the point view of student and parents where many hypotheses were found to have significant differences. In summary, the results of the empirical study highlight new insights about how attitude can play an important role in the students' intention.

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