

Attitudes towards Vocational Education and Training in the Context of United Arab Emirates: A Proposed Framework

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Abstract

The main goal of this study is to investigate the effect of parents and students' attitude towards the intention to enter the vocational education in the UAE through examining the impact of different factors of attitude such as individual, organization, social, and demographic. Due to the inconsistent results, a new research has established for further investigation through introducing new variables that may better explain the nature of that relationships. In the literature, many theories have suggested that link between variables such as The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The scope of the study is limited to the students who involved and non-involved in vocational education and along with their parents in the UAE. The importance of this study has many sides in both theoretical and managerial contribution. Theoretically, however, the variables of this study before studied separately in different countries especially in developed countries, but not studied in developing countries such as the UAE. In addition, this study will investigate the integrated variables in one of the developing countries, which fill the gaps in the existing body of knowledge. Therefore, the effects of attitude of students and parents on students' intention to VET program will be study. The target of sample will be the students in grade 12 from the vocational and technical schools and institutions in the UAE and also another students who are not in the VET program which were from grade eight, the grade which before the grade that accept student to enter VET program. After all the relevant interviews are complete, the answers for all of the questions will then be analyzed. The process of analyzing will has three major stages. Firstly, to obtain the correct knowledge and realize the profound meanings from the answers given, the investigators have to re-read the answers a few times. Second stage will be categorizing the answers into different groups. In the third stage, analyzing the answers according to these groups and defines them in a qualitative manner; this is to ascertain the main themes and applied meanings behind the answers given.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 18.0 software (SPSS) was used in order to test the quantitative questions of this research. The data will analyze in four ways: Descriptive statistics, independent, samples (t) test, one-Way ANOVA test and scheffe' test.

In case of finding the results, the parents' questionnaire will distribute the three domains: Vocational education importance, Vocational education future and Social perception of vocational education. Whereas the students' questionnaire will distribute the four domains: vocational education attitudes, social perception of vocational education, vocational education future and vocational education importance.

Furthermore, this study will help UAE government to plan, implement, enhance the vocation education within students to motivate them and develops their skills to find jobs for sustainable future. The increasing amount of technical education and vocational training resembles to a lowering capacity by business owners in the private industries, reflecting the negative effects of the basic operating sector of the production of technical education and vocational training. The significance of the study is prevail in being one of the first studies dealing with the connection between the schools of technical education and vocational training schools and the private sector (as a business) market.

Keywords: United Arab Emirates, vocational education and training, theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, social cognitive theory

1. Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is located within the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula in the Arabian Gulf, with Saudi Arabia to the South and the border of Oman in the east, including sharing the borders of their sea together and along with Iran, the United Arab Emirate also known as the UAE or at times been called as Emirates are another Arab country. With an estimated area of 83,600 square kilometers, the country total populations in 2010 are estimated to be at 8,264,070 as claimed by the UAE Bureau of Statistics (Ibpus.com, 2012).

The UAE is a federation of seven emirates (equivalent to territories), each reigned by a heritable Sheikh, who will select one of their members as the leader of the federation of the seven emirates. The landmasses of the emirates are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm al-Quwain. The capital city of the UAE is Abu Dhabi, one of the state's centres of commercial and cultural undertakings. The UAE formal religion is Islam, and the official language is Arabic (Farouk, 2013).

Under the British Authorities, the Development Council initiated technical learning in 1958 in the UAE along with the inauguration of the first technical constitution in Sharjah. Mechanical, auto mechanics, electrical and building trades are courses were presented in the technical school. A similar school was instituted in Dubai in 1964 and another one was set up in Ras al Khaima in 1969 (Unterbrunner, 1987).

A reported by UNICEF, the adult literacy rate in UAE ranks at 90% by 2008-2012. Meanwhile throughout the 2007 until 2011, the female within the age of 15 to 24 years old have shown a advanced rate of literacy which is 97% against the 94% literacy rate for the male within the age of 15 to 24 years old (UNICEF, 2012).

The objectives of this literature review are to show the arguments of the past observational investigations about the attitudes against vocational education training in various countries around the world. The discovery from the past studies will be used to both inform and structure the investigation methodologies that I will be carrying out in my own investigation of parents and students' point of view of VET programs being conducted in the UAE. The previous studies will also be used to compare the new findings from the new study to develop patterns and differences.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

A great many behaviors of everyday life may be considered under volitional control in the sense that people can easily perform these behaviors if they are inclined to do so. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Azjen, 1975) is designed to predict volitional behaviors of this kind and to help us understand their psychological determinants. Furthermore, as its name implies, TRA is based on the assumption that human beings usually behave in a sensible manner; that they take account of available information and implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions. Consistent with its focus on volitional behavior, the theory postulates to act in accordance with their intentions. The theory assumes that the relative importance of these factors depends in part on the intention under investigation. In other word, people intend to perform behavior when they evaluate it positively and when they believe that important others think they should perform.

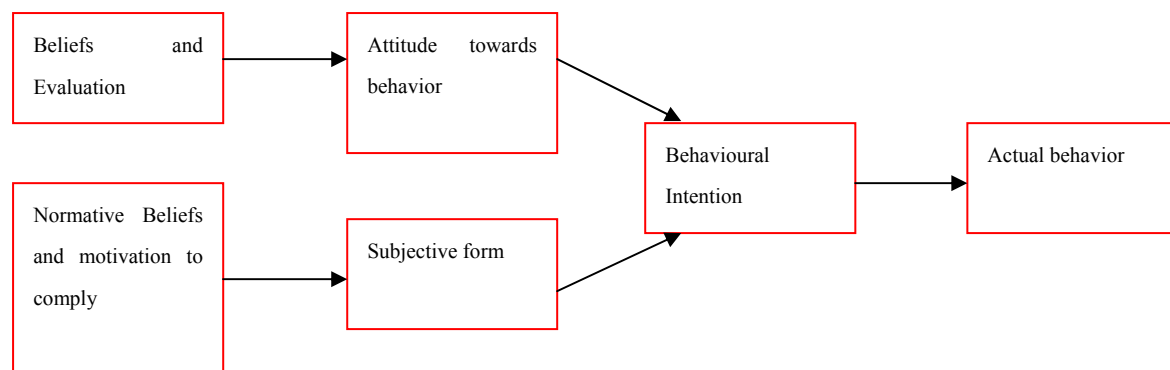


Figure 1. Theory of reasoned action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have continued to be employed and adapted by researchers to predict behavior. Previous study has been conducted by using the same theory but the TPB have been adapted by researchers to predict behavior towards technology use. In addition, George and William (2004) utilized the TPB in their investigation of planned behaviors and internet purchasing by extending the attitude towards behaviors and perceived behavioral control components to include Internet trustworthiness beliefs and unauthorized use beliefs to determine online purchasing behavior. However, in this study, researcher adapted TPB to study the attitudes, perceptions and influence of parents and student towards vocational education.

The development of the TPB (Figure 1) (Ajzen, 1985) which was developed from TRA, led researcher consider to used TPB for predicting student's behaviours towards vocational education.

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was initiated in 1980 as the Theory of Reasoned Action to foretell an individual's purpose in behavior at a definite time and place. The theory was envisioned to enlighten all manners over which individuals have the capacity to utilize self-discipline. The key constituent to this framework is behavioral intent. Behavioral intentions are driven by the probability that behavior will have the estimated result and the subjective assessment of benefits and risks of that consequence (Robert Stephen Weinberg, 2011).

The TPB has been used effectively to foresee and describe a wide range of health deeds and objectives including smoking, drinking, welfare services consumption, breastfeeding, and substance use. The TPB states that behavior accomplishment is determined by motivation (purpose) and skills (behavioral control). It is categorized in three types of beliefs-behavioral, normative, and control. The TPB contains six concepts that jointly signify individual's genuine control over the behavior

Mutual findings show that attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are interconnected (Siragusa & Dixon, 2009). Attitudes have roots in our beliefs and it influences our behavior. There seems to be common agreement among communal psychologists that most human behavior is goal-oriented (Lewin, 1951; Heider, 1958).

2.3 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Bandura presented social Cognitive Theory in response to his discontent with the ideologies of behaviorism and psychoanalysis. In these two principles, the role of cognition in motivation and the role of situation are mostly disregarded. Social Cognitive Theory explains the fact that folks do not merely respond to environmental stimuli, but relatively pursue and understand information (Bandura, 1986). People act as their own motivators and develop a system inside of jointly networking inspirations (Bandura, 1999, p. 169). Though Social Cognitive Theory shelters several areas for instance ethical decision and physiological stimulation, inquiry that is principally concentrated on self-efficacy, or beliefs depending on one's abilities of magnificently finalizing tasks or objectives (Locke & Latham, 2002).

3. Literature Review

In this section, a discussion about the studies will also be carried out into two parts. First parts is talking about theoretical framework that includes the variables of this study, which are attitude towards vocational education, and training in UAE. In addition, student intention will be elaborated from other previous studies.

The second part discusses the relevant theories and models, which studied about three theories related to attitudes and behavior. These are The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Third part introduces the hypotheses developments that were discussed to postulates the suggested hypotheses to be tested in the following sections.

3.1 Attitude (Positive and Negative Attitudes towards the VET)

Investigation presents that the general view against vocational education is negative and that the VET programs are suffering from the low reputation and bad image in the society. (Kassotakis, 1978; Saiti & Mitrosili, 2005). Parents in Greece are keener to persuade their children to study in general schools rather than enrolling them in the Greek technical school due to that they believe that their children will be prevented to continue in higher level of education if they pursue in technical schools. More reactions are positive over VET from the parents whom children enrolled in vocational education programs rather than the parents with children who never participate in VET programs. They felt that vocational schools serving a number of high schools and studied were a workable way to provide educational opportunities for high school (Saiti & Mitrosili, 2005).

Affects the students view to choose VET. Many factors this includes the people surrounding them; for instance,

the parents, siblings and even friends. There were times that when a teacher interpersonal action can play a role in influencing VET courses. The students who received more doubts, uncertainty, 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 (AlSa'd, 2007; Henderson & Fisher, 2008).

While in Ghana, parents view on vocational education is that the vocational skills are not competitive enough for more high-income jobs in the labour market (Ryeetey, Doh, & Andoh, 2011).

2011). Many results on their investigations showed that people have less positive attitudes against the vocational and technical education and vocational education is not easily accepted with vocational school has a bad reputation in the society (McKenna & Ferrero, 1991; Rossetti, 1990; Gilliland, 1967; Saavedra, 1970).

3.1.1 Individual Factors (Perceived Behavioural Control)

Investigation in the non-rural students demonstrate that both seen barriers and seen support from the family members were they participated with a student's commitment to school and encourage for success in their future work lines. They segregated individual and contextual aspects relevant to the educational and vocational lives of non-rural minority youth (Maureen, David, Anna, Jennifer, & Laura, 2003; Wibisana, 1996). In city, it is common for the parents who have some college or vocational education have more positive perspectives (Reagor & Rehm, 1995).

Family's income and surrounding environment play a part in students' decision to join the VET courses. By following the socioeconomic standards, students who came from family with lower education are more willing to join in VET programs rather than the students who live in the city with much more higher background levels in terms of income, housing prices and also educational qualifications were less interested in joining the vocational programs (Anlezark et al., 2006; Polesel, 2007).

The vocational technological programs will remain as a subordinate discipline in terms of societal acknowledgement, adequate capital and parental/children's option (Kennedy, 2012).

3.1.1.1 Social Factors

As claimed in one of the study in Papua New Guinea (PNG), integrated academic or VET courses are required to be implement or consider at secondary schools level. Students' path would be enhance for continue education and training, so does in employment and improving their social life in Papua New Guinea (Daniel K., 2012).

Societies and culture can influence on choosing and attitudes of people. In the country of Nigeria, their people mostly choose a job due to their social standards and level in their society as well as looking to satisfy their friends and associates under-mining their aptitude for the course (Okorie, 2011). People tend to look for the vocational and technical education as for the handicapped, for the dropout and for students who do not do well in other courses (Odu & Biöse, 2003). The vocational course issue can be worst in the country if there is a society sociological affects.

The lower socio-demographic groups have less confidence in VET programs. This is because they themselves have been seeing themselves at the bottom level of social hierarchy, and so they do not believe that the VET programs can help in improving their work prospects than the upper level of society (Euroborometer, 2011).

3.1.1.2 Parents

VET students are more spontaneous about their decisions in education and mostly follow more on their peers decisions, this is due to their parents and family have to struggle for the resources required to make the 'exact' educational decisions for their children. (Freire & Giang, 2011), Whereas Parents' influence can be about 34% the decisive reason (Sube, 1981).

3.1.1.3 Teachers

In making decision on vocational education, there are many aspects, which give an impact on the decisions based on different societies. The aspects such as, a personal point of view, curriculum, future employment, campus facilities and attractions, the education fees, parents and also teachers. The government should not stop campaigning a good reputation for vocational education and its students to the society (Pimpa, 2007; OKocha, 2009; Edward, Weedon, & Riddell, 2008).

3.1.1.4 Friends

In Ghana, another research discover that there is commonly no negative view attached to vocational training as an alternative to the students' academic education (Andoh, 2011; Gilbertson, 1995). Results signified that concern is student pursued program staff have an important effect on enrolment, having a better connection with

the educator colleagues in the local high school and promoting colleagues to communicate with students in that environment, might help to increase in enrollment. An investigation mentioned, "Area centers should present themselves as socially friendly places with more chances to meet new people, and should also attend certain social events to help with dealing with transitions. In order to erase the separation from old ones, they can deal with making new friends." (Dave & Palmer, 2005, p. 45).

In order to support the students in making choice of subjects for their future careers, career guidance is a very prominent in VET schools and instates (Noncolela, 1999; Edward & Weedonand Riddell, 2008). Investigated by Sube in 1981, there are some people in the community who affect the students of parents and peers in making decision about a career in East Germany, those are the parents and friends. According to his study, it has been shown that parents and friends' influential power has a huge impact, which can contribute to 50% in young people decision-making in choosing a career.

3.1.2 Organizational Factors

3.1.2.1 Organizational Support

Learning suppliers and awarding entities should prepare parents, teachers and advisers to help the young people's vocational education decisions. Promoting generally should threaten the negative views of vocational education and emphasize its benefit. An informed debate is requiring on the benefits of VET courses in order to equip the young people to face their working life (Batterham & Levesley, 2011).

A social institution such as agricultural enterprises and centres for vocational guidance can affect career decisions for about 40% of young people and other state institutions (Sube, 1981).

3.1.2.2 Curriculum

Researchers found that the school vocational education is a prominent issue in boosting the labor performance. They also recognized that upgrading the school curriculum and hiring good teachers are necessarily needed in order to match with the increasing demands for school management efficiency. Another investigator discovers that through education, there is a mismatch between the development of oriented labor force requirements and skills capacities (Saiti & Mitrosili, 2005; Tagicakiverata & Wiaibuta, 2012).

There two attitudes measuring samples used by Hatzios (1996) in order to compare the attributes of the marketing education program, tangible or symbolic. She discovered that students' behavior is closely more connect to the program's tangible attributes than the other one, which is symbolic attributes. This result showed the effectiveness of the models to measure student's behavior in any vocational aspects. By using this model, educator can equip the programs to adequately inform students and make them become more attracted into the right vocational courses.

3.1.3 Demographic Variable

3.1.3.1 Gender

In the research, it is shown 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 major influence is there on the point of view against technology based from gender and social standards (Rajput, 1988).

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

Male students have more positive attitude against the vocational and technical programs than the female (Bergh, 1997; Walters, 1989). However, the girls have more positive point of view towards vocational education, whereby the boys hold more negative concepts towards VET programs (Rojewskiand & Sheng, 1993). Negative perceptions about the vocational programs are more from the male students who come from the higher socioeconomic standard (Rossetti, 1990).

3.1.3.2 Income

Many countries, particularly in Switzerland, among the workers who hold a secondary vocational degree especially, an employer learning will takes place. (Department of Economics and Swiss leading House in the Economics of Vocational Education), (Does Vocational Education Affect Employee learning?).

The low social standard of technical works is the main reasons to influence in the negative attitude against the

technical education in Greece (Kassotakis, 1978).

Research showed that promotions on the significance of VET courses in developing the countries could led to an increase budgetary considerations for the VET courses. In this path of education, this will help in improving the continue studying pattern by educators. The school vocational program could also be seen as an important matter in order to improve the labour performance (Benson, 2013; Valkanos, Efthymios, Stella, & Sofia, 2010).

Besides that, an investigator discover that some parents who choose the vocational school are not focusing on preparing their children for a vocation but instead they view vocational education as another path for their children and also a chance for their education (Arshad, 1984). (Euroborometer, 2011) Results from survey assume that VET courses have to teach skills that the employers need and with that, they must offer high-level of learning experiences. At the graduate level, the vocational skills should have been introduce as another add on subject in order to develop the employable skills within the students and to prepare them for self-employment will only be achievable if the programs are organized based on the labour market and the aptitude of the students (Adinarayana, Devi, & Mahadeva, 2011).

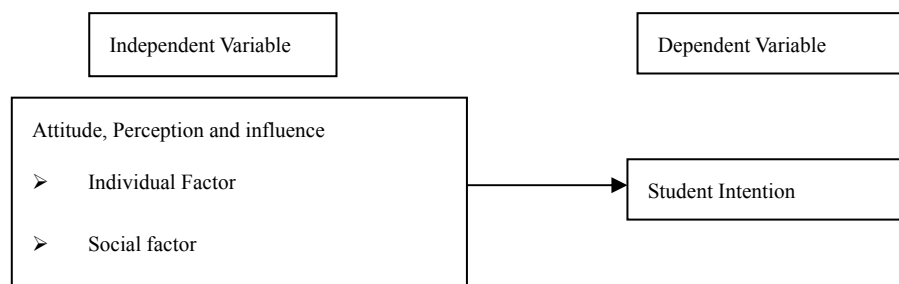
3.1.3.3 Experience

Based on Cochrane (2007), “no clear relationship between the career aspiration and also cultural capital, yet those youth with required funds are more confident that they will pursue to university. Among them, more than half have no certain vision of their career, but have more confidence with the facts that they will obtain certain qualifications which will benefit on them in whatever they will do.” (2007, p. 12)

“In Nigeria, due to the deficiency of understanding of the significance, scope and also content of the courses or deficiency of work information, vocational and technical education is remaining rejected by the students and parents. To create the required career awareness and job information, career education should be making it use in order to enable the students to get certain information about their career choices.” (Igbinedion & Ojeaga 2012, p. 229).

4. Theoretical Framework

The following framework is proposed to investigate the intention of students to enter the vocational educational and training institute in the UAE. Based on the thorough literature review, there are some gaps in the previous studies, which will be overcome by this study. This framework is unique to investigate the relationships between variables in one of developing countries, the UAE. Most of previous studies were in developed countries and few or none of them in the Middle East nations.



5. Discussion

It is a clear the importance of student intention in educational process. According to the above framework, we can notice the important of individual factors in student’s intention. This relationship was discussed in previous studies such as (Maureen, David, Anna, Jennifer, & Laura, 2003; Wibisana, 1996; Anlezark et al., 2006; Polesel, 2007), they point out that the segregated individual and contextual aspects relevant to the educational and vocational lives of non-rural minority youth. Family’s income and surrounding environment play a part in students’ decision to join the VET courses. By following the socioeconomic standards, students who came from family with lower education are more willing to join in VET programs rather than the students who live in the city with much more higher background levels in terms of income, housing prices and educational qualifications were less interested in joining the vocational programs.

The social factors also play an important role in educational process. Although in previous studies reported apposition and significance relationship between these such as Societies and culture can influence on choosing

and attitudes of people. In the country of Nigeria, their people mostly choose a job due to their social standards and level in their society as well as looking to satisfy their friends and associates under-mining their aptitude for the course (Okorie, 2011). The lower socio-demographic groups have less confidence in VET programs. This is because they themselves have been seeing themselves at the bottom level of social hierarchy, and so they do not believe that the VET programs can help in improving their work prospects than the upper level of society (Euroborometer, 2011).

The important of organization factors also has importance in students' intention. This important has been reported by different authors such as organizational Support. (Batterham & Levesley, 2011; curriculumsaiti & Mitrosili, 2005; Tagicakiverata & Wiaibuta, 2012).

Furthermore, demographic factors such as age, gender, experience, income, play significant role in student's intention. The relationship between them has been reported in many studies such as 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 major influence is there on the point of view against technology based from gender and social standards (Rajput, 1988). The low social standard of technical works is the main reasons to influence in the negative attitude against the technical education in Greece (Kassotakis, 1978). Based in that, we can expect the join effect of individual factors, organizational factors, demographic and social factors on student's intention.

6. Conclusion

Literatures from previous studies have been reviewed through discussing the study's variables in different countries that involves the gaps of previous research. A set of learning resources which required to described newly developing framework for competence-based of the independent variables relation to the dependent variables of the study.

In order to understand the way in which policymakers have and continue to define the role of employers VET, it is necessary to turn first to the work of the most influential. In addition, the study supports the notion that inspiration gives employees the appropriate motivation for the day-to-day duties and errands in the organization.

Theories of Planned Behavior, Social Cognitive and Reasoning have been discussed extensively from different approaches. To have a sense of exceedingly demands of the dynamic world as several associations partake in the VET such as employers, VET trainers, teachers, lecturers and careers majors. The overview of the Youth Training Scheme is studied in terms of its properties on companies' company-wide teaching performs, effects have been principally disregarded by previous examines. Social program study of primary source documentation from government bases, international agencies and other significant organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The last section of this chapter will talk about the variables included in this study that develop the theoretical framework. Dependent and independent variables will be discuss to postulate the hypotheses.

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