

# MEASURING STUDENTS ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS: THE STUDY OF AL DHAFRA REGION, ABU DHABI, UAE

Dr Abdul Quddus Mohammed, Higher Colleges of Technology

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** *The aim of this study is to explore entrepreneurial intentions (EIS) of graduating students from the al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi. The factors that are likely to affect the entrepreneurial intentions are perceived educational support, perceived relational support, perceived structural support, and plans after graduation.*

**Design/Methodology/Approach-** *The survey method is used to study the problem using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 graduating students at Ruwais Higher College of Technology representing students from the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi, out of which 53 valid questionnaires were received. The data was analysed using the frequency analysis, correlation and linear regression analysis.*

**Findings-** *The results of this study show that perceived educational support, perceived relational support, perceived structural support, and plans after graduation have a significant strong relation with entrepreneurial intentions. The findings of this research have indicated that the education received by the respondents encourages them to be an entrepreneur. This research has also indicated that relational support from family and friends and the structural support by the government entities play an important role in entrepreneurial intentions.*

**Research limitations-** *The limitation of this study is that it is not possible to generalize the findings of this research, as the data was collected from a small sample of graduating students of one college from the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi. The practical implications discussed in this research are to promote entrepreneurship among the students from Abu Dhabi and UAE. The results of this study will provide more insights into the entrepreneurship literature and beneficial to policymakers, researchers and academicians in UAE.*

**Originality/value-** *The findings of the study shows that most of the students, especially female, want to be entrepreneurs and to contribute to the UAE economy. They believe that their college is providing educational support, their family and friends offering relational support and the government are providing structural support towards their ambitions. This study will serve as an argument in the limited availability of literature on entrepreneurial intentions of UAE students.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Intention, Perceived Educational Support, Perceived Relational Support, Perceived Relational Support, United Arab Emirates.

## INTRODUCTION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a very young country with 79.3 percentage (7.5 million out of 9.46 million total UAE population) of its population is between 15 to 54 years (UAE Population Statistics, 2019). Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) account more than 94 percent of companies running in UAE, contributing more than 60 percentage of GDP in UAE (Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority's report, 2018) and expected to increase by 70 percent by 2021, SMEs in UAE employ 86 percentage of total private sector workforce (Dubai Statistics Center, 2018, Impact of SMEs on UAE Economy 2017) highlighting the importance of this contribution in supporting country's economic diversification from oil-based economy. This signifies that the development of SMEs will contribute in the economic and employment development in UAE. Entrepreneurship is a process of initiating new businesses and creation of values for entrepreneurs (Morris & Jones, 1999). The entrepreneurial activities play quite important roles in promoting economic and social development Entrepreneurship is important for job creation thorough self -employment. (Gallant et al., 2010; Romer, 1994; Van Gelderen et al. 2008).

In an employment environment dominated by discussion on public and private sector jobs, entrepreneurship may develop as a third stream career option available for UAE national youth (Ryan et al., 2011). United Arab Emirates Unemployment Rate in 2018 the unemployment rate was 1.7 % reduced from 2.46 in 2017. The estimated unemployment percentage among UAE national youth is expected to increase because of automation (Horne et al., 2018; Okari et al., 2018). One of the important factors of unemployment in UAE, is the National youth prefer to work in already saturated government sector for better salaries and safety (Al-Waqfi & Fortenlechner, 2014; Salih, 2010). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2011) reports that although a very high proportion (51.9%) of UAE youth perceive entrepreneurial activity. The intention to start new business was only 2% (Home et al., 2011). Some of the reasons for this low rate were economic cost of failure (money), social cost of failure (reputation) and personal cost of failure (motivation). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2018) reports UAE adult population is favourable towards increasing entrepreneurship activity, 55.2 percent of UAE working age population considers that they have entrepreneurial attitude and abilities and 54.3 percent of adult population is constrained from starting a new business due to fear of failure, the highest in the world.

Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) is the genesis of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development. It is self-acknowledged conviction by individuals that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plans to do so at some point in the future (Thompson, 2009). EI is willingness of an individual to be an entrepreneur and can be explicated by several factors that contributing in EI (Souitaris et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2007; Fayolle et al., 2006). Some of the factors that influence are personality traits, demographic characteristics, family support, and the attitude to be an entrepreneur. The most important theories that shape research on EI are: the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) based on phytosociological approach (Ajzen, 1991) and the theory of entrepreneurial event (Shapero & Sokol, 1982).

Few studies have been conducted on EIs of Middle East region (Saleh & Salhieh, 2014; Sayed, & Ben Slimane, 2014), Saudi Arabia (Wassim, 2016), Kuwait (Wajeih Elali et al., 2016), Bahrain (Minwir Al-Shammari & Rana Waleed, 2018) on factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions. One of study on UAE youth entrepreneurial intention was organized by Noora Yousif (2017) reveals that age, gender, entrepreneurship experience and family role model have direct and indirect effect on entrepreneurship. Study also finds that Emirati male have stronger intention than female, and most importantly the education has insignificant effect on EI (Entrepreneurial Intention). However, the research on EI in Middle East and especially in UAE is considered to be short supply.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the factors that influence the intention of graduating students from Al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi in UAE. Accordingly, this present study is intended to fill the gap in literature in Al Dhafra Region, where there was no evidence of such studies.

### **AL DHAFRA REGION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN UAE ECONOMY**

United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the most important destination for the trade, business and economic activities; it is the 2nd biggest economy in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries after Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Economy UAE Annual Report, 2017). UAE is a federation of seven emirates comprising Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ras Al Khaimah, Um Al Quwaim, Ajman & Fujairah. Abu Dhabi is a capital city of UAE. Traditionally UAE is oil dependent economy with oil reserves seventh largest in the world and mainstream of these reserves are situated in Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi (World Energy Council, n.d.) Al Dhafra region represents seventy percent of the area Abu Dhabi in UAE, covering towns such as Ruwais, Sila, Ghayati, Liwa, Madinat Zayed, Mirfa, Baniyas & Dalma. It is the home of ADNOC (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company) with country's ninety percent of natural resources for gas, oil, and hydrocarbons. EIs of students in this region are significant as UAE economy is transforming itself into non-oil dependent in future.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Entrepreneurship among students depends, to a large extent, on three different factors that include the social and relational support as well as the relevant education of the field. These factors are supported by Langkamp Bolton & Lane (2012), stating that a supportive environment is essential for entrepreneurial mind-set including the institutional and government support as well as the basic infrastructure. Kautonen et al. (2015) states that UAE is a country that is prosperous, wealthy and dynamic and the government greatly understands the ever-changing needs of citizens for which it has established a world-class national educational system in less than four decades that promotes Entrepreneurship among the Youth (De Clercq et al., 2013).

Hence, it is imperative to study that whether the students in Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi are getting education through which their perceptions and intentions can be moulded towards entrepreneurship and motivate them to become entrepreneurs. Almost every university

in UAE offers programs and courses related to entrepreneurship, though these institutions lack an understanding regarding the factors through which the intentions of students are affected towards becoming an entrepreneur as well as the role played by the family business background on the entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes of students.

The following research study aims to measure the entrepreneurial intentions among the Emirati students. To advance with the study, the researcher chose to conduct the study within the geographical location of Abu Dhabi. Given below are objectives that were designed for accomplishing the purpose of study:

1. To understand the concept of entrepreneurial intentions
2. To investigate the factors that influence the entrepreneurial intention of students in UAE
3. To measure the impact of factors identified on the entrepreneurial intention of students in Abu Dhabi
4. To recommend the suggestions for the practical implication of the study.

## LITRATURE REVIEW

In the light of the study conducted by Austin et al. (2012), the creation of new enterprise is defined as entrepreneurship. The emergent interest is revealed by this definition that rather than a state of being, entrepreneurship is a process of becoming. According to the study conducted by Krishna (2013), entrepreneurs are not born, they are made. In the simulation of potential for the entrepreneurship, the perceptions development process plays a central role. Through advising effective policies, counselling and education, the process of perceptions development can be made helpful. The potential entrepreneurs would be able to exploit the external environment and can be empowered.

Through many different studies on students, the self-efficacy, risk propensity, innovativeness and locus of control are also verified as the strong predictors of the entrepreneurial intentions. However, the personality of an individual and different kind of supporting elements has a concern and great influence in the process of decision to become and entrepreneur. For the government, policy makers and researchers, entrepreneurship in the field of hospitality and tourism should be of great concern. In the light of the study conducted by Bacq & Janssen (2011), by the definition entrepreneurs are the individuals who use the resources for profit making and creative purpose.

### Perceived Education Support

In order to boost the economic activity, it has been studied by several researchers that entrepreneurship is an important factor. The opportunities that are based on the resources available are exploited by the entrepreneurs. The human capitals, cultural and financial are most important of these resources. In the light of the study conducted by Grichnik et al., (2014), the human capital is the utmost significance and the resource of human capital is beneficial if it possesses the advance experience and education. In this manner, a possible entry for the entrepreneur is made by the human capital resource. According to the study conducted by Oosterbeek et al. (2010), the education programs are found to be related insignificantly with the

entrepreneurial intentions because of parent's residence location. Therefore, it is also associated with the support of family. The intentions of students in order to become the entrepreneur are not supported by the education. There is a great importance of family or parents for an individual to take any kind of decision.

According to the study conducted by Kuckertz & Wagner (2010), in entrepreneurial intentions of an individual, education is not the only predictor but there are few considerable elements that enable an individual in order to develop the entrepreneurial intentions but in the presence of environmental factors which include social norms and supportive culture. For entrepreneurship, the importance of education is getting essential substantially. The students who are involved in getting the education of entrepreneurship along with the specialization in industry can double the effective support and role of education in developing the student's intentions in order to become an entrepreneur. In the light of the study conducted by Pache & Chowdhury (2012), for developing the interest of an individual and for the entrepreneurial process, the education is important and essential in the field of entrepreneurship. In a certain field, there is an essential role of education in building the interest of people. In the field of entrepreneurship, the initiative towards educating people is increasing at a fast pace. In endorsing the entrepreneurial intentions, the entrepreneurial education can be very pertinent among the students.

### **Perceived Relational Support**

It has been found in several studies that education is not the only predictor of the entrepreneurial intentions. It is important to identify the other kinds of structural or social support that are needed in order to develop the entrepreneurial intentions. According to the study conducted by Pinillos & Reyes (2011), one dimension of the culture is collectivism versus individualism culture. The theory explains that the culture may vary as the extent or degree to which the decision of an individual is influenced by the people. The support of family plays an important role for the decision and intentions of individual about the particular situation or issue. In several collectivist cultures, the most obvious and strongest bonds are the family bonds. In the light of the study conducted by Popper (2012), people often do not even think of something which is not supported or appreciated by the members of the family. There is an impact and power of every member to change the actions, decisions, intentions and thinking of an individual. Throughout the life, the reactions are faced by individuals every now and then. According to the study conducted by Schröder et al. (2011), individuals have more strong intentions to become an entrepreneur whose parents have their own business as compared to those whose parents work for other's businesses. However, it is not necessary all the time and in every case.

### **Perceived Structural Support**

Structural support is the most causative factor for the entrepreneurial intention other than the education and social or rational support. The entrepreneurship depends on better financial systems which help to promote the productivity enhancing activities that are innovative and is an

outcome of better financial systems. According to the study conducted by Lim et al., (2010), the entrepreneurial intentions of an individual are influenced by the broader structure of economic, legal and political systems. Several environment factors have an impact on the individual's entrepreneurial intentions which include basic structure. Therefore, it is assumed that in the development of entrepreneurial intentions, the supportive structure can be of considerable significance. The study by Autio et al. (2014), identified the potential barriers for the innovation activities and new start-ups, there is a key role of government in developing and creating the entrepreneurial environment. The support of government, favourable economic conditions, marketing opportunities and freedom are the environmental and structural factors that are responsible for the mind-set of an entrepreneur in order to flourish among the students. The presence of these factors in an environment provides individual the supportive structure which is helpful in developing the entrepreneurial intentions.

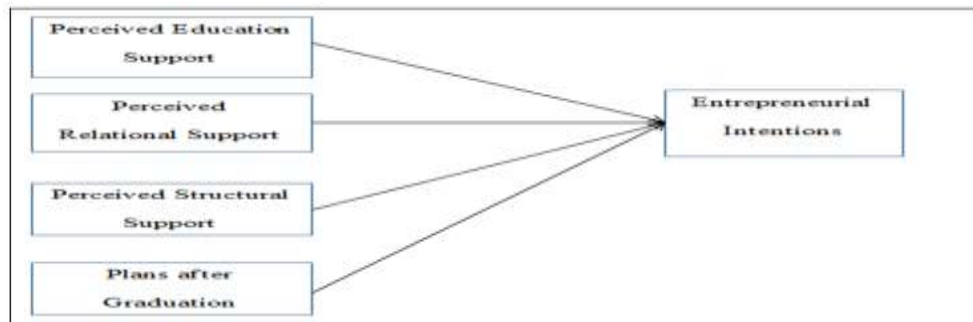
### **Entrepreneurial Intentions**

According to the study conducted by Oinas-Kukkonen (2013), there is a significance of element of intention on behavioural outcomes such as belief, attention and expectation. It can be stated that the intention is an important factor for any sort of behaviour to happen. In the light of the study conducted by Hayton & Cholakova (2012), in order to attain something, the mental state which directs the attention of entrepreneurs towards a specific object or way is referred as intentionality. There is a huge role of intentions in diverting the mind of an individual towards the entrepreneurial venture. Being creative is also considered as the internal psychological factor and this is why the creativity is considered as one of the experiences of entrepreneurial intentions. There is a close support and direct positive relation of personality traits with entrepreneurial intentions. Incorporating the understanding from the physical approach is required in measuring the entrepreneurial intentions. According to the study conducted by Tyszka et al., (2011), entrepreneurship is the outcome of need for personal attitude, self-confidence and achievement. According to the research study conducted by Wiklund et al., (2011), entrepreneurship is defined as the kind of self-employment with uncertain or indefinite rewards.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the psychological theory of entrepreneurship is used which focus on the emotional or mental elements that derive the entrepreneurial intentions of individuals. This theory is used to identify the variables in the research (Singer, 2014), with assumption that that there is a need for achievement possessed by the entrepreneurs that derives their activity. The other theory which is used in this study is the opportunity-based theory found that entrepreneurs excel by the opportunities created by the cultural, technological and social factors (Ratten, 2011). These both theories helped in identifying the variables that influence and affect the entrepreneurial intentions of the individuals.

## Conceptual Framework



**FIGURE 1**  
**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework shows the relation between the dependent and independent variable that are studied in the research. From the above framework, it can be identified that perceived education support, perceived relational support and perceived structural support are three independent variables that affect the entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, the entrepreneurial intention is the dependent variable.

## HYPOTHESES

Following are the hypothesis of the research:

*H1: There is a significant impact of perceived education support, relational support, structural support and plans after graduation on intentions to become an entrepreneur among Emirati Students in Al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi.*

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

A quantitative design was adopted by researcher since the research study aimed to measure the entrepreneurial intentions among the students at Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi specifically. Quantitative research design enabled the researcher to obtain information and data in numeric form against the variables chosen for study which were then analysed using a statistical tool to measure the outcomes. The data collected through quantitative approach is based on facts and does not involve the perceptions and understanding of researcher in the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

## **Data Collection Method**

For this research, the researcher chose primary data collection since the research was intended to measure the entrepreneurial intentions of students from the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi for which new data was necessary that had to be collected from the students. The key benefit of this method is that the data is new and is collected specifically to address the concerns of research study at hand. The data collected is aimed to measure the variables of study through which valid as well as reliable outcomes are ensured

## **Sample Method and Size**

For this research, a non-probability convenience sampling was chosen by the researcher to choose respondents for collecting the data. In this approach, the respondents are chosen non-randomly as well as according to their ease of accessibility and availability. A total number of 100 graduating students from Ruwais Higher College of Technology, Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi, UAE were chosen from whom the data was collected in November- December 2018 through a survey questionnaire. The students who study in this college travel from nearby towns Ghayati et al. representing the whole Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi. The survey was implemented through [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and the respondents were invited by email to respond to the online questionnaire. However, only 53 participants responded the survey questionnaire with total response rate of 53 percentage. The final year students from Engineering, Business programs are chosen as target audience as respondents as they are going to be graduated and looking for the immediate career opportunities for them initiating a new business might be a realistic option (Krueger et al., 2000, p. 425), and this type of sample is very common in entrepreneurial intention research studies (Linan & Chen, 2009). The sample size could not have been bigger as the graduating students' numbers are generally less in this college.

## **Data Analysis Method**

Since the data was collected based on a quantitative approach and through the help of survey questionnaire, the data was analysed using Excel. Particularly, frequency analysis has been used for assessing and interpreting the responses that have been obtained from the respondents. Moreover, the researcher has also used correlation analysis and linear regression analysis for testing the hypothesis regarding relationship and impact among variables.

## **Survey Instrument**

Entrepreneurship Intention Survey Questionnaire was designed based on the literature review on four scales: perceived educational support (Oosterbeek & VanPraag, 2010; Grichniketal, 2014 ; Kuckertzand Wagner, 2010; Pacheand Chowdhury, 2012), perceived relational support (Pinillos & Reyes, 2011 ; Popper, 2012 ; Schröder et al., 2011), perceived structural support (Limetal., 2010; Autio etal, 2014) and entrepreneurial intention (LiOinas-



Kukkonen, 2013; Hayton & Cholakova, 2012; Tyszka et al, 2011). The survey questionnaire also consists of demographic information of the respondent. Five-point Likert scale was applied in designing the questionnaire, with value 5 as strongly agree and the value of 1 as strongly disagrees.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Total 53 respondents have participated in the research study. It is shown in the Table 1 below that out of the total respondents, 56% (N=30) respondents were studying engineering and 43% (N=23) respondents from business whom the data was obtained will graduate in 2019 and 2020. The table below signifies that 73.58% (N=39) respondents were student, and 86.68% (N=47) had taken a course of innovation. From the total respondents 62.26% (N=33) respondents had family members and close relatives as entrepreneurs, and 79.25% (N=42) were female. From the respondents of this research, 84.91% (N=45) were in the age bracket of 20 to 25 years. Lastly, among all the respondents, 79.25% (N=42) were single

### Descriptive Statistics

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Program of Study	Engineering	0.5660	30
	Business	0.4339	23
Year of Graduation	2019	0.4528	24
	2020	0.5471	29
Employment Status	Entrepreneur	0.0566	3
	Student	0.7358	39
	Employee with Public Service	0.1321	7
	Employee with Private sector	0.0755	4
Course on Innovation	Yes	0.886792	47
	No	0.113208	6
Family and Close Relatives as Entrepreneurs	Yes	0.6226	33
	No	0.3774	20
Gender	Male	0.2075	11
	Female	0.7925	42
Age Group	20-25 Years	0.8491	45
	26-30 Years	0.0377	2
	31-35 Years	0.0566	3
	36 Years and Above	0.0566	3
Marital Status	Single.	0.7925	42

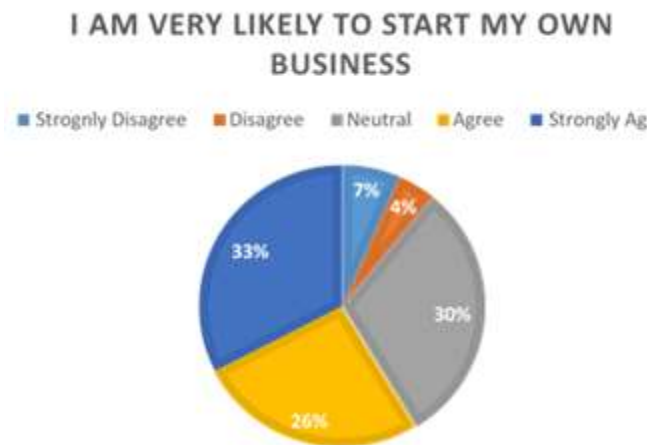
	Married.	0.2075	11
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### Internal Consistency

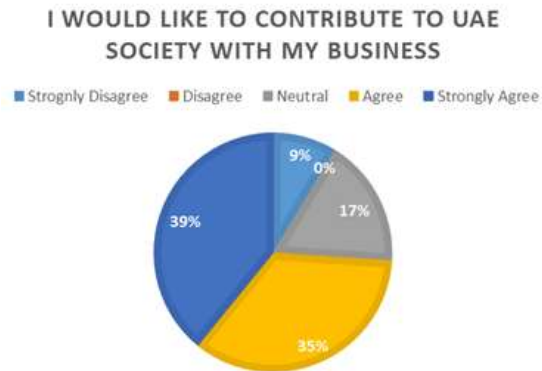
In order to measure the internal consistency of the data set, the test of Cronbach Alpha was used in SPSS. For this research study, the Cronbach Alpha has calculated to be 0.989. This indicates that there is a high level of consistency in the data.

### Entrepreneurial Intentions

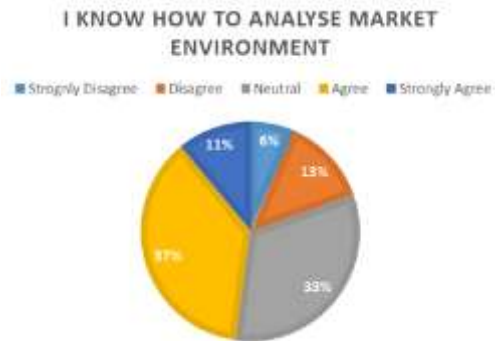
In order to analyse the entrepreneurial intentions of the respondents several questions were asked. Out of the 46 respondents who have answered the questions 58.7% (N=27) respondents said that they want to start their own entrepreneurial ventures (see figure 2). According to 74% (N=34) of the respondents said that they wanted to contribute towards the economy of UAE by starting their own entrepreneurial ventures (Figure 3). Moreover, 48% (N=22) respondents said that they are aware of the market analysis (see figure 4). Regarding knowing about business plan 45% (N=21) said that they were aware however, 31% (N=14) of the respondents disagreed showing that they do not know how to make a business plan (Figure 5).



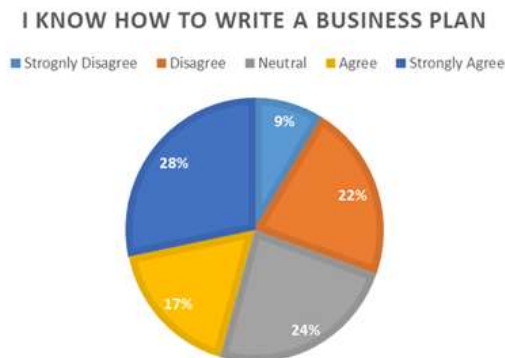
**FIGURE 2  
LIKELIHOOD OF STARTING BUSINESS**



**FIGURE 3  
CONTRIBUTION TO UAE SOCIETY**



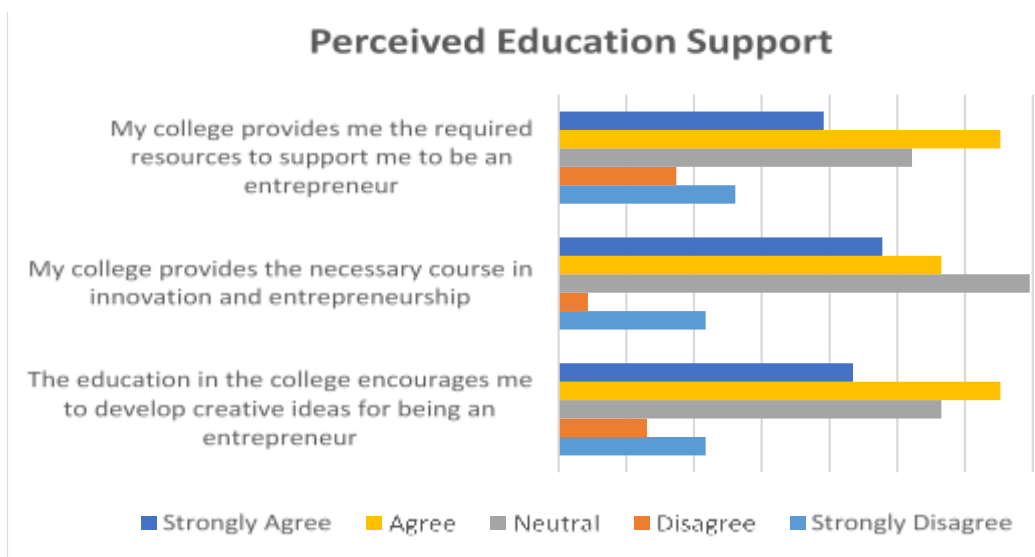
**FIGURE 4  
KNOWLEDGE OF MARKET ENVIRONMENT**



**FIGURE 5  
KNOWLEDGE OF BUSINESS PLAN PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

One of the factors that tend to influence the intentions of an individual to become an entrepreneur is the perceived educational support. Out of the total respondents, 54% (N=25) of

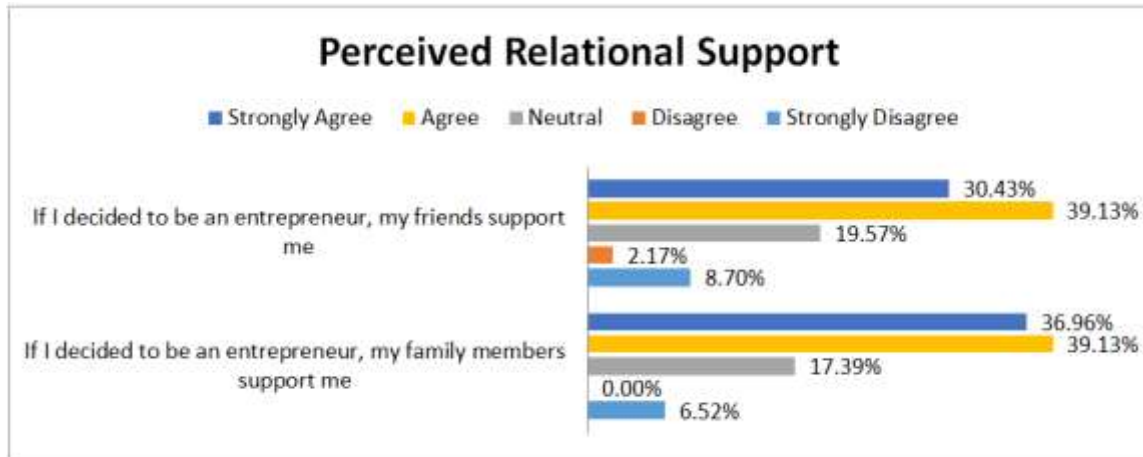
them said that the education that they receive in collected helps them to develop innovative ideas. It is shown in Figure 6 that when the respondents were asked regarding provision of necessary courses in their college of innovation 52% (N=24) were in agreement however, 35% (N=16) of the participants were neutral in this regard. Lastly, figure 6 signifies that 52% (N=24) of the respondents said that their college has provided them the support that is required to become an entrepreneur.



**FIGURE 6**  
**PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

**Perceived Relational Support**

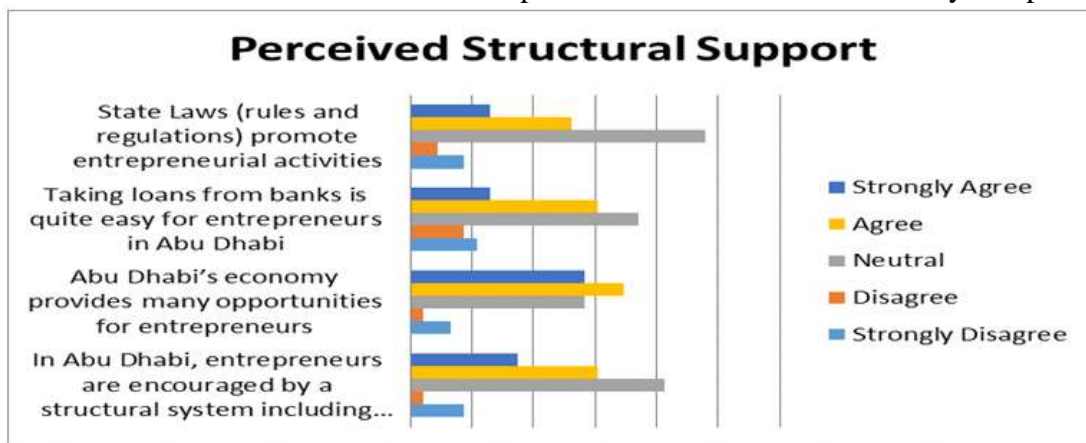
The literature has indicated that one of the factors that influence the intentions to become an entrepreneur comes from the relational support that is received by individuals. When the respondents were asked if their friends will support their decision of becoming an entrepreneur, 70% (N=32) of them agreed and when they were asked if their family members would support them 74% (N=34) agreed. Hence the results have indicated that majority of the participants had relational support. It is shown in Figure 7



**FIGURE 7  
PERCEIVED RELATIONAL SUPPORT**

**Perceived Structural Support**

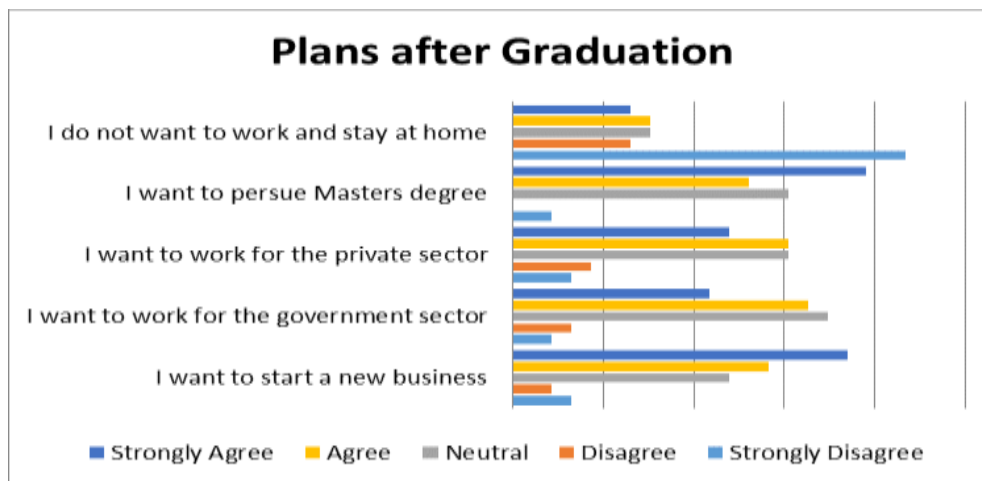
Structural support is important in terms of developing intentions to become entrepreneurs. When the respondents were asked questions regarding state laws, loans, and overall structure of the economy majority of the respondents were neutral as shown in figure 8. The major reason for majority of the respondents in neutral might be the fact that the students are not aware of the external environment and aspects of business such as economy and policies. The major reason for majority of the respondents in neutral might be the fact that the students are not well aware of the external environment and aspects of business such as economy and policies.



**FIGURE 8  
PERCEIVED STRUCTURAL SUPPORT**

### Plans after Graduation

Figure 9 represents the results of the different questions that were asked to form the participants regarding their graduation plans. The most important question among all was regarding the wish of the participants to start a new business, for which 65% (N=30) agreed. When the respondents were asked if they want to work for government sector 54% (N=25) of the respondents agreed and same was the case when they were asked regarding the private sector. Hence the results show that most of the respondents want to pursue entrepreneurship after the graduate.



**FIGURE 9  
PLANS AFTER GRADUATION**

### Correlation Analysis

There is a statistically significant relationship that is found between entrepreneurial intentions, perceived structural support, perceived educational support, and perceived relational support which is shown in figure 9 below. To measure the strength of relationship between the variables, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used. The strongest positive relationship is observed among entrepreneurial intentions and perceived structural support (0.986) which is followed by perceived relational support (0.970), plans after graduation (0.969), and perceived educational support (0.917).

<b>Correlations</b>					
	Entrepreneurial Intentions	Perceived Educational Support	Perceived Relational Support	Perceived Educational Support	Plans after Graduations
Entrepreneurial Intentions	1	0.917**	0.970**	0.986**	0.969**
Perceived Educational Support	0.917**	1	0.880**	0.917**	0.902**
Perceived Relational Support	0.970**	0.880**	1	0.975**	0.966**
Perceived Educational Support	0.986**	0.917**	0.975**	1	0.987**
Plans after Graduations	0.969**	0.902**	0.966**	0.987**	1

## **EXAMINING THE HYPOTHESIS AND DISCUSSION**

This research is intended to study the factors that influence the entrepreneurial intentions of Emirati students from the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi. A linear regression was utilised for testing the hypothesis. About the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions can be found from Table 2. The independent variable of this research is the different factors that tend to influence the entrepreneurial intention of an individual and thus the dependent variable is intentions to become an entrepreneur. The sub independent variables of this research are: perceived education support, perceived relational support, perceived structural support, and plans after graduation.

*H1: There is a significant impact of perceived education support, relational support, structural support and plans after graduation on intentions to become an entrepreneur among Emirati Students Emirati Students in Al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi.*

There is a statistically significant relationship that can be found among perceived education support, perceived relational support, perceived structural support, and plans after graduation with intentions to become entrepreneurs ( $R=0.988$ ) as seen in Table 3 below. Below, the table 4 indicates the value of ANOVA which are responsible for stating the overall statistical significance of the model. The p value is 0.000 in the table hence all the independent variables of the research have an impact on the intentions to become an entrepreneur. Table 5 signifies that

individually there is a significant impact of perceived structural support on intentions to become entrepreneur ( $p=0.000$ ). However, there is no individual impact of perceived educational support ( $p=0.123$ ), perceived relational support ( $p=0.076$ ), and Plans after graduation ( $p=0.237$ ) (See Table 5). These findings confirm that all factors i.e., perceived education support, relational support, structural support and plans after graduation influence the intentions to become an entrepreneur among Emirati Students in the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi. Therefore, the hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.988 <sup>a</sup>	0.976	0.974	0.14484

a. Predictors: (Constant), Plans after Graduations, Perceived Educational Support, Perceived Relational Support, Perceived Educational Support

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.062	4	8.766	417.805	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	0.86	41	0.021		
	Total	35.922	45			

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.129	0.035		3.643	0.001
	Perceived Educational Support	0.094	0.059	0.097	1.575	0.123
	Perceived Relational Support	0.188	0.104	0.202	1.818	0.076
	Perceived Educational Support	0.788	0.175	0.882	4.504	0
	Plans after Graduations	-0.162	0.135	-0.183	-1.201	0.237



a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intentions
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The research objectives of this research are discussed in the context of the findings of the study that have been deduced from the frequency analysis. The first objective of the research study was to know about the entrepreneurial intentions. According to Hayton & Cholakova (2012) the intentions of anticipation of becoming entrepreneurs in the future can be termed as entrepreneurial intentions. There are certain personal orientations which contribute towards having intentions to become entrepreneur. From the findings of this research it has been found that people who are most likely to take up risks and challenges are motivated towards becoming entrepreneurs in the future. Moreover, from the analysis of the responses it has also been found that the individuals who are able to analyse the external environment are worthier of having entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, it has been found from the findings of the research that the individuals that are interested in building their own business and to see it grow over the years are more suitable for becoming entrepreneur in future. Overall, the primary results of the survey questionnaire are coincided with the secondary findings of the research which contributes towards the authenticity and accuracy of the overall findings of this research study

The second and third objectives were related to finding out different factors that tends to influence the entrepreneurial intentions of the individuals. Through the literature review, there were certain factors that were identified with respect to the intentions to become an entrepreneur. Grichnik et al., (2014) have considered that perceived educational support is an important factor that can influence the entrepreneurial intention. It basically is related to the educational programs in which the students are enrolled which tends to help them to focus towards the entrepreneurship. Majority of the respondents of this research have stated that they consider having the right education to be fundamental for having intentions towards becoming an entrepreneur.

In the light of the study conducted by Popper (2012), people often do not even think of something which is not supported or appreciated by the members of the family. In this respect, it has been found by the primary research that the support they receive from their family and friends. The last factor that has been found to be important with respect to the entrepreneurial intentions is the perceived structural support. It has been found by the research conducted by Lim et al., (2010), that the entrepreneurial intentions of an individual are influenced by the broader structure of economic, legal and political systems. This has also been backed by the primary research that has been carried out.

### **LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This research has limits that affect the generalizability of research findings. The small sample size of only 53 students (especially more female respondents) from only Ruwais Higher College of Technology (HCT), from the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi participated in the survey. In order to generalize the findings of this research a sufficient representative sample from

other colleges in the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi will be taken in to consideration in future research.

Although the current research used the theoretical framework consistent with the previous research studies on the theme of the project. The present study did not take into consideration other factors that play important role in entrepreneurial intentions like cultural, economic, demographic and environmental factors. Thus, it is recommended that the future research should include these factors to investigate entrepreneurial intentions of Abu Dhabi Al Dhafra Region students to reveal all factors that influence the phenomenon.

The research findings of this research are based on quantitative methodology using regression analysis, which inclines limit and present the unclear a causal relation between variables, so it unavoidably results in prejudiced results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). However, alternative statistical techniques such as structured equation models could have been used to accept or reject the hypothesis of the study.

Therefore, this research needs to be further explored with more sample size and using sophisticated statistical methods to avoid these limitations. Hence more inclusive and exhaustive study is needed that could offer more understandings into the entrepreneurial intentions of Al Dhafra Region, Abu Dhabi students. Further research on students' entrepreneurial intentions can also be expanded to other cities in UAE and other countries in Arab region to explore cross region, cross cultural studies and gender gap in these countries as suggested by previous studies (Díaz-García, & Jiménez-Moreno, 2010, Garcia Rodriguez et al., 2015; Linan et al., 2011)

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The current research provides empirical evidence that perceived education support, perceived relational support and perceived structural support tends to impact the entrepreneurial intention in a substantial manner especially in the context of Al Dhafra Region Abu Dhabi, UAE. As this research is consistent with previous studies, the findings of this research can use useful to assess the stability of these entrepreneurial intentions in future (Krueger et al., 2000) and to establish entrepreneurship intention and behaviour link (Kautonen et al., 2013, 2015; Shirokova et al., 2016).

These findings play vital role in promoting entrepreneurship through more awareness on government programs on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and training to motivate the minds, attitudes and intentions of students from Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi, UAE to opt entrepreneurship as a high potential career option. These programs can build entrepreneurial talents and capabilities and expose them to prominent UAE based entrepreneurial role models to provide positive dimensions to attitudinal change towards entrepreneurship career (Solesvik et al., 2013, 2014). Practical implications of the findings of this study are pivotal in entrepreneurial development in UAE (Gird & Bagraim, 2008) and for the decision makers in the government in promoting entrepreneurship culture and entrepreneurship as a prominent career option. And the higher education institution policy makers can also make use of the findings of this research in developing more entrepreneurship development education and training programs to engage more students in being entrepreneurs in UAE.

## CONCLUSION

This research is intended to measure the entrepreneurial intention of Emirati students from Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi. A survey was organized with a sample of 53 students chosen to collect data on factors that influence their entrepreneurial intentions. The results that are supported by the statistical analysis indicate that the fore mentioned factors: perceived education support, perceived relational support and perceived structural support tends to impact the entrepreneurial intention in a significant manner. It should be noted that if the education that is received by the individuals that encourages them to be innovative and start their own entrepreneurial ventures rather than climbing up the corporate ladder. Moreover, it has been found from this research that if their family, friends, and people from their social structure tends to indulge in entrepreneurial activities or encourages starting entrepreneurial venture then it can help in terms of having entrepreneurial intentions. In terms of perceived structural support more responded seems to be neutral as the major reason for majority of the respondents in neutral might be the fact that the students are not aware of the external environment and aspects of business such as economy and policies. Lastly, the findings of this research have also pointed out that the support from different economic, political, and social structure is positive to motivate the individuals to be interested in starting their own venture and work towards their growth. It was also found that most students want to be entrepreneurs and to contribute to the development of UAE economy and believe that their college is providing educational support, their family and friends offering relational support and the government is providing structural support towards their ambitions.

Looks like they need training in business planning and entrepreneurship. Perceived education support perceived relational support and perceived structural support tends to impact their entrepreneurial intention in a significant manner. This finding is consistent with previous studies of Grichnik et al., (2014) educational support is an important factor and Lim et al., (2010), that the entrepreneurial intentions of an individual are influenced by the broader structure of economic, legal and political systems. Autio et al. (2014) studies also confirm that the governmental support for initiating business start-up will influence entrepreneurial intentions of individuals. The findings related relational factors supporting the entrepreneurial intentions was supported by several other studies by Engle et al. (2010), Iakovleva et al. (2011), Basu & Virick (2008), Angriawan et al. (2012), and Popper (2012) shown that individuals become ambitious of initiating business when they find that others close to them agree with their idea of business start-up. Individual education support is also influencing student's intention to be an entrepreneur; these findings are consistent with the research results supported by various studies from Otuya et al. (2013). Pache & Chowdhury (2012); Kuckertz & Wagner(2010).

### UAE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAMS THAT NEEDS MORE AWARENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

UAE Government is very active in entrepreneurial programs and appreciates the economic and social benefits of entrepreneurship that will help in economic development, this is

the reason it is providing more than required support and encouragement to entrepreneurs in terms of facilitating funding through the establishment of Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development since 2007 (Financing Business (n.d.). Dubai government supporting entrepreneurs through Mohammed Bin Rashid Establishment for Young Business Leaders (Also known as Dubai SME) by offering several grants to support creative business plans and also offering generous support and information and outreach on SME (Small and Medium Scale Enterprises) sector ranging from business planning, financing, simplifying official procedures to open businesses, and offering full support in establishing business in UAE towards accomplishing its vision of making Dubai as a centre for entrepreneurship Dubai SME (n.d.). Some of the prominent programs offered by Dubai SMEs are HI 2- Hamdan Innovation Incubator program to start business from the root, to offer start-up support for the new entrepreneurs Intelqaq Programme has been launched, has been established as part of Dubai SME. Emtiyz is a unique service by Dubai SME to support franchisee business. Dubai Silicon Oasis Authority (DSO) has been established to initiate businesses in high technology fields. To encourage women entrepreneurs the government established Emirates Business Women's Council which is a representative organization for women entrepreneurs in UAE. To motivate and recognize small businesses and entrepreneurs Mohammed Bin Rashid Awards for Young Business Leaders are given annually. To encourage entrepreneurship from the school level Young Entrepreneur Competition (YEC) is organized. Perhaps, there is more need to create awareness of these government initiatives and programs on entrepreneurship development to the undergraduate level students from Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi to make use of the available opportunities to become an entrepreneur in UAE.

Further research on entrepreneurial intentions can be expanded with larger representative sample and using advanced analytical tools and focusing other factors such as culture, economic, demographic and environmental factors not only limited to Al Dhafra Region in Abu Dhabi but also other cities in UAE, other Arab countries to explore cross country cultural studies and gender gaps to understand the phenomenon of factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among students.

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