

THE VIEW OF EMIRATI STUDENTS ON EDUCATION AS A SPECIALTY: UNDERSTANDING THE UNWILLINGNESS TO JOIN FACULTIES OF EDUCATION IN THE UAE

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ABSTRACT

The dwindling number of qualified educators poses an international problem of epidemic proportions. With technology as a catalyst and more lucrative careers emerging daily, today's university students are less likely to choose education as a career path. Current teacher shortages and lack of teacher credentials put future generations' educational achievement at risk. Studies show a major decline in the number of college applicants targeting education as a field in many countries, including the United Arab Emirates. The lack of male and female applicants in the UAE drove governmental universities to close their education college departments. This study targeted Emirati students in an attempt to understand the reasoning behind their shift away from education as a specialty. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods research design to simultaneously collect quantitative and qualitative data. Results revealed that in the UAE, parental influence and cultural background heavily influence the Emirati students' career path choices. Lack of awareness of the UAE's educational vision and potential cause unwillingness of Emirati students to join educational faculties. Results also revealed that institutional reasons have the biggest impact on students' unwillingness to join the educational sector, followed by professional reasons, economic reasons, and social reasons respectively. To change that, the UAE needs to raise awareness about its needs and vision for the educational sector, as well as provide monetary and professional incentives for potential practitioners. It also needs to establish some institutional reforms to ease teaching for current and future teachers.

Keywords: Teacher Shortage, Teacher Credentials, Institutional Reasons, Professional Reasons, Economic Reasons, Social Reasons

INTRODUCTION

Context

Teacher shortage, both in number and qualification, is an existent and growing issue facing the international educational sector. Teacher credentials such as certification, relevant training, and experience are indicators of the quality of education today's youth are receiving. These indicators reveal that the magnitude of this shortage is even higher than currently estimated, with fewer teachers available to meet current market needs (García & Weiss, 2019). Teacher shortage issues are further aggravated by the fact that the appeal for education as a specialty is lessening amongst potentials and current practitioners. Studies suggest that half of Americans would not want their child to pursue teaching as a profession (PDK Educational Foundation, 2019), while half of current American practitioners are seriously considering leaving the profession (PDK Educational Foundation, 2019). Another study conducted by the Center for American Progress also showed that between the years 2010 and 2018, the enrollment in teacher preparation programs dropped by a

third (Partelow, 2019). Educational departments in the United States currently face an annual estimated shortage of more than 100,000 teachers and is estimated to rise to 200,000 by 2025 (García & Weiss, 2019). Current enrollment trends as well as teacher deficits determined that 69 million schoolteachers must be recruited by 2030 to meet the world's educational market needs and 2030 education goals (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016). The shift away from education as a career path is noticeable across both genders, but much more dramatically in women as traditional gender roles caused more women than men to take up the role of an educator in previous years (Habes et al., 2019; Morris, 2021). In the last 40 years, the number of female college students majoring in education has shrunk from 32% to 11%, while the number of men is changing in less significant ways (Morris, 2021).

The lessening appeal of education as a college major and career path is driven by economic, professional, social, and institutional motivations. Studies show that the reasons behind teacher shortage and the unwillingness of new students to enroll in education colleges include low pay and inadequate benefits, difficult working conditions and job pressures that cause stress and burnout, lack of societal support and appreciation, and the lack of autonomy and decision-making power in the overall educational institution; other reasons include student attitudes, lack of professional growth, and desire to pursue other passions (García & Weiss, 2019; PDK Educational Foundation, 2019). Teacher shortage can have very serious consequences on the educational system, on student development, and on the country's economy. Ineffective teaching has a direct impact on the students' ability to absorb and process information, hereby affecting their academic performance (Darling-Hammond, 2004; García & Weiss, 2019) Having a lot of instability and teacher shortage in the educational field causes higher teacher turnover, taking up more economic resources than needed and compromising the reputation of the educational field and the ability to professionalize it (Darling-Hammond, 2004; García & Weiss, 2019; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020) According to Darling-Hammond (2004), filling a single teacher vacancy costs \$21,000, increasing the annual cost of turnover in America from \$70.3 billion to \$8 billion in recent years. Unfortunately, the consequences of any decline in the educational field affects individuals of lower economic means, as poorer neighborhoods, public school systems, and disadvantaged communities tend to be the ones to receive less attention and funding (Darling-Hammond, 2004; García & Weiss, 2019; Sutcher et al., 2019).

Statement of the Problem

The appeal for education as a specialty has been decreasing at an alarming rate in recent years in the United Arab Emirates (Dickson, 2012; Martin & O'Brien, 2011; Salama, 2012).

Similar to the rest of the world, technological advancements and more prestigious and lucrative jobs drive Emirati students away from education towards other fields (García & Weiss, 2019). Institutional and professional obstacles also play a major role in the decline of education as a career choice (García & Weiss, 2019; PDK Educational Foundation, 2019) In the specific case of the UAE, cultural background and societal stereotypes associated with the educational field further perpetuate this notion (Dickinson & Le Roux, 2012). Colleges, in turn, are receiving fewer applicants to education colleges yearly, and many practitioners are exiting the field for other opportunities (Alhumaid et al., 2020; Martin & O'Brien, 2011; Salama, 2012).

The shortage of male and female Emirati teachers can significantly affect the future of education in the country. Teacher shortage as well as the lack of teacher credentials will compromise the ability of the future leaders of the country to reach their full potential (García & Weiss, 2019). From early childhood programs, through primary and secondary school, the presence of highly qualified, motivated, and supportive educators is vital for student learning. Ineffective

teaching strongly disturbs the academic achievement of students in school, hereby affecting many other aspects of their lives such as their confidence and self-esteem (Darling-Hammond, 2004; García & Weiss, 2019) The United Arab Emirates vision for 2030 also includes education as a major part of its agenda, as the country is striving to achieve the highest possible standard of education for future generations (National Strategy for Higher Education 2030, 2020). In alignment with this vision, Emirati teachers play a vital role in providing a more nurturing and culturally sensitive educational environment for Emirati students in the classroom (Dickson, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2015).

Aim and Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the reasons behind the huge shift of Emirati students away from the educational field. This study targets three main objectives:

1. Find reasons behind students' shift from educational fields and provide solutions possible.
2. Encourage both male and female Emirati students to enroll and major in education to achieve UAE's 2030 vision.
3. Empower teachers at their current teaching jobs and enhance their social and economic side of living.

The results from this study will be used to produce other reports, manuscripts, and peer-reviewed journal articles. This study will also contribute to the growing body of literature in the field of education in the UAE and the world. It will also be the first research of its kind in Ras Al Khaimah and the rest of the UAE.

Materials and Methods

The general inquiry of the research involves the reasons behind the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education. The general hypothesis of the study states that economic, social, professional and institutional reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education. (Habes & Alghizzawi et al., 2020; Salloum & Al-Emran et al., 2021) The study aims to explore the reasons behind the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education, as well as potential solutions to attract students back into educational fields and to encourage existing students to remain in the profession. The research design allowed the researcher to simultaneously collect qualitative and quantitative data and then combine the results of the analysis to better understand the research (Al-Sarayrah et al., 2021; Chan, 2010; Habes et al., 2021; Salloum et al., 2019). The researcher began with an extensive review of the literature then collected qualitative data and quantitative data from the field.

Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative data collection process took place at two different phases. **Phase one** involved in-depth face-to-face interviews with the parents of graduating students from Ras Al Khaimah and Abu-Dhabi who will be choosing their study path in a year. These interviews involved three major open-ended questions and were conducted to understand the cultural and social dimension behind the students' decisions, as research revealed that parents in the UAE have a huge impact on the students' decision-making process. Phase two of the qualitative data collection process followed the quantitative survey, and it involved three open-ended questions presented at the end of each survey to the survey subjects, which are graduating students from all of the emirates who will be choosing their study path in a year. These questions were used to explore further the

reasons behind the students' decisions, as well as possible solutions for their unwillingness to join faculties of education.

Phase One: Interviews with Graduating Students' Parents

Themes

- Parental influence on student career path decisions
- Parental awareness of the country's needs and vision
- Parental cultural background and general opinion of their son/daughter being a teacher

Questions

1. Do you influence your child's career path decision? If yes, how?
2. Are you aware of the country's needs in the educational sector? Are you aware of its vision?
3. Does your cultural background influence your child's career path decision? What is your opinion of your son/daughter being a teacher?

Population and Sampling

The target population for this phase of qualitative research consists of the parents of graduating students from Ras Al Khaimah and Abu Dhabi, who will be choosing their study path in a year. The unit of analysis is the parent. The sample size consisted of 50 parents, 25 from Ras Al Khaimah and 25 from Abu Dhabi purposefully sampled by the researcher. The interviews with officials were conducted by pre-setting for each interview, through contacting specific individuals from specific schools.

Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of an interview protocol prepared by the researcher for the parents of graduating students. The interview protocol consisted of three major open-ended questions used to elicit data about the parents' role in their children's career path choices. Question one asked the subject about whether they are involved in their child's career path choice. If the answer was yes, then the question was followed up by asking them how they are involved. Question two asked the subject about their awareness of the country's needs in the educational sector. The third and final question elicited data about the influence of the cultural background of the parents as well as their opinion of teaching as a job for their child.

Data Collection Procedures

The interviewees were asked for appointments by telephone. Once the subject agreed, the interviewees were asked for appointments by telephone. Once the subject agreed, an interview day, time, and location were set up. Interviews took place at the interviewees' homes. The interviewer first introduced themselves and briefed the interviewee about the study. The interview was audio recorded and then transcribed, if the subject agreed (Muhaisen et al., 2020). The answers were otherwise written by hand if the subject did not agree. The interviewer used the interview protocol to conduct these interviews in the preferred language of the interviewee (English or Arabic).

Phase Two: Interviews with Graduating Students

Themes

- Reasons for unwillingness to join faculties of education
- Influences on the decision-making process of choosing a career
- Potential solutions that could have encouraged them to choose education over other fields

Questions

1. Provide other reasons for unwillingness to join faculties of education.
2. What influences your decision-making process of choosing a career?
3. What potential solutions could have encouraged you to choose education over other fields?

Population and Sampling

The target population for this phase of qualitative research consists of the quantitative survey subjects, which are graduating students from Abu Dhabi and Ras Al Khaimah, who will be choosing their study path in a year. The unit of analysis is the student. The sample size consisted of 390 students who agreed to take the survey.

Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a list of open-ended questions presented to the survey subjects at the end of each survey. Question one asked the subject to provide other reasons (not mentioned in the survey) for their unwillingness to join faculties of education. Question two asked the subject about their influences in the decision-making process of choosing a career. The third and final question elicited data about potential solutions that could encourage the student to choose education over other fields.

Data Collection Procedures

The interviewees were asked to answer these questions after taking the survey. The interviewee was given the choice to either answer the questions orally or in writing. If the subject chose to answer the questions orally, the researcher wrote down the answers. If the subject chose to answer the questions in writing, then the researcher relied on that as the recording method. The questions were available in the preferred language of the interviewee (Arabic or English).

Quantitative Research Design

Hypothesis

The general hypothesis of the study states that economic, social, professional and institutional reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education. The sub-hypotheses are:

1. Economic reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education.
2. Social reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education.
3. Professional reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education.
4. Institutional reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education.

Variables of the Study

The independent variables of the study are economic reasons, social reasons, professional reasons, and institutional reasons. Each of the variables is further defined by the literature review into 8 items used to measure each of the variables. The dependent variable of the study is the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education. The confounding variables of the study include gender (male and female) and stream of education (general, advanced, and vocational).

Population and Sampling

The target population for the quantitative research is graduating students from Abu Dhabi and Ras Al Khaimah, who will be choosing their study path in a year. The unit of analysis is the student. The sample size consisted of 390 graduating students from 8 schools, 4 of which are from Abu Dhabi (2 male schools and 2 female schools) and 4 from Ras Al Khaimah (2 male schools and 2 female schools). The researcher adopted a random sampling technique to choose the subjects. The surveys were conducted by pre-setting for each survey, through contacting specific individuals from specific schools.

Research Instrument

Face to face close-ended structured surveys were conducted with students to elicit data about the variables of the study. The questionnaire began with an introduction about the research and continued in four parts:

Part one included 8 items that related to the first independent variable: economic reasons

Part two included 8 items that related to the second independent variable: social reasons

Part three included 8 items that related to the third independent variable: professional reasons

Part four included 8 items that related to the fourth independent variable: professional reasons

The 32 items were meant to test the level of agreement of the students using a 5-point Likert scale (1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree.

Data Collection Procedures

The schools were asked for approval and appointments by telephone. Once the school agreed, the interviewer visited each of the schools. The subjects were selected at random from the graduating classes of each visited school. Once the subject agreed, he/she was presented with the survey by the interviewer. The interviewer first introduced themselves and briefed the interviewee about the study. Then the subject was given the option to answer the questions orally or in writing. If the subject chose to answer the questions orally, the researcher wrote down the answers. If the subject chose to answer the questions in writing, then the researcher relied on that as the recording method (Habes et al., 2020). The questions were available in the preferred language of the interviewee (Arabic or English).

Results

Qualitative Research Design

Phase One: Interviews with Graduating Students' Parents

1. Do you influence your child's career path decision? If yes, how?

Interviews revealed that parents have a significant impact on their children's career path decisions. Parents were first asked whether or not they believe they had any influence, to which 38 of them answered a solid "yes". 7 stated "I think so" and only a few said "no". Follow-up questions were asked to explore the type of influence parents believed they had on their children's career choices.

2. Are you aware of the country's needs in the educational sector? Are you aware of its vision?

Interviews revealed that parents are not very aware of the United Arab Emirates needs in the educational sector. The answers varied between "yes" and "no", and when follow-up were asked for the interviewee to elaborate, the subjects expressed that they are aware of a lack of Emiratis in the educational sector, and that the country relies on expats from places like Jordan and Egypt to fill needed positions. That being said, the interviewees were not aware of the severity of the issue. A follow-up question was asked to shed light on the United Arab Emirates 2020 vision, which many of the interviewees were aware of, but not much was said about the specificities of the vision.

3. Does your cultural background influence your child's career path decision? What is your opinion of your son/daughter being a teacher?

Interviews revealed that the cultural background of the parents has a huge impact on their children's career path decisions. Parents were first asked whether or not they believe it had any influence, to which 43 of them answered a solid "yes" and only a few said "no". Follow-up questions were asked to explore the parental opinion of education as a career for their children. Interviews revealed that although the teaching job is highly respected and admired by the culture of the United Arab Emirates, parents do not tend to support their children to pursue it. Many of the answers described teaching as "difficult", "does not pay enough", and "not socially reputable", and a "dead-end".

Phase Two: Interviews with Graduating Students

1. Provide other reasons for unwillingness to join faculties of education.

Interviews revealed a discrepancy between what students believe are reasons for their lack of willingness to join educational facilities and what the parents believe. A large number of the students stated that they are just "not interested" in becoming educators. They expressed interests in other careers. They placed less emphasis on parental control and culture and more on personal choice.

2. What influences your decision-making process of choosing a career?

Interviews revealed that there is no single mechanism for the students' thought process of choosing a career. Some of the answers recognized parental influence, while others elaborated further on personal choice. Words that were continuously repeated in the answers included "success", "money", "lifestyle", "meaning", "passion", and "convenience".

3. What potential solutions could have encouraged you to choose education over other fields?

Interviews revealed that students and parents alike view the educational sector as lacking in many areas such as financial comfort, social recognition, and career growth. Some of the answers described “more money” and “higher standard of living”. Other answers shed light on the difficulty of the job, expressing that they would consider it if the country helped make teaching “easier” for educators.

Quantitative Research Design

In the quantitative part, a survey was conducted to investigate economic reasons, social reasons, professional reasons, (Habes, Ali, et al., 2020; Salloum, AlAhbabi, et al., 2021) and institutional reasons as causes of the unwillingness among Emirati students to join faculties of education. The survey consisted of 4 main sections as follows:

- Economic Reasons (8 items)
- Social Reasons (8 items)
- Professional Reasons (8 items)
- Institutional Reasons (8 items)

Sample Frequency

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	199	51.0
	Female	191	49.0
Emirate	Abu Dhabi	141	36.2
	Dubai	168	43.1
	Sharjah	11	2.8
	Fujairah	2	0.5
	Umm Al Quwain	34	8.7
	Ras Al Khaimah	34	8.7
	Study path	General	207
	Advanced	157	40.3
	Vocational	26	6.7
	Total	390	100.0

The survey was conducted on a sample size of 390 graduating Emirati students from different schools across the UAE as outlined in Table (1). The majority of the sample is from Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The sample consisted of 49% females and 51% males, from three different study paths: general, advanced, and vocational.

Instrument Reliability

	Values
Economic Reasons	0.86
Social Reasons	0.88
Professional Reasons	0.89
Institutional Reasons	0.84
Total Score	0.95

Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency. These values of Cronbach's alpha were considered enough for the purpose of this study.

"What are the reasons behind the unwillingness among Emirati Students to join faculties of education?"

To answer this question of the study, means and standard deviations of reasons behind the unwillingness among Emirati Students to join faculties of education were computed as shown below Table 3:

Rank	N	Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	4	Institutional Reasons	3.59	0.861
2	3	Professional Reasons	3.54	0.828
3	1	Economic Reasons	3.53	0.848
4	2	Social Reasons	3.34	0.954
		Total Score	3.50	0.774

According to Table (3), "institutional reasons" constitute the highest mean of 300.59 regarding the degree of student agreement. It is then followed by "professional reasons" with a mean of 300.54, "economic reasons" with a mean of 300.53, and "social reasons" with a mean of 30.34. The table also reveals that the total mean is 300.50. The mean and standard deviation of each sub-item in the domains were calculated in the following sections.

"Economic reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education"

Rank	N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	4	Opportunities for receiving bonuses and promotions in the teaching profession are less than in other professions	3.96	1.080
2	3	Work in the private sector offers financial benefits that	3.91	1.065

		exceed those in the teaching profession		
3	6	Low rewards offered to teachers for their work	3.64	1.156
4	2	Teachers' salaries are low	3.53	1.222
5	5	Lack of opportunities for overseas secondment	3.49	1.175
6	7	Lack of financial allocations necessary for providing teachers with practical in-service training	3.44	1.145
7	8	Lack of financial allocations necessary for providing educational aids in schools	3.24	1.287
8	1	Lack of healthcare services provided to teachers	3.03	1.236
		Economic Reasons	3.53	0.848

According to Table (4), “opportunities for receiving bonuses and promotions in the teaching profession are less than in other professions” (item 4) receives the highest mean of 30.96 regarding the degree of student agreement. It is followed by “work in the private sector offers financial benefits that exceed those in the teaching profession” (item 3) with the second highest mean of 30.91 regarding the degree of student agreement. Item 1, which is “lack of healthcare services provided to teachers” was ranked as the lowest mean of 3.03. This table also shows that the total mean of “economic reasons” is 300.53.

"Social reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati Students to join faculties of education"

Table 5 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SOCIAL REASONS CAUSING THE UNWILLINGNESS OF EMIRATI STUDENTS TO JOIN FACULTIES OF EDUCATION, RANKED IN A DESCENDING ORDER				
Rank	N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	2	No light is shed on the real role of teachers in social media	3.74	1.188
2	1	The teachers' image in society is not taken seriously	3.55	1.311
3	3	Lack of moral incentives, as the teacher is not thanked for any work he does or encouraged to do	3.47	1.298
4	8	The numerous restrictions imposed by society on teachers' behaviors	3.41	1.161
5	4	Lack of communication between teachers and officials in the Ministry	3.38	1.242
6	7	Lack of appreciation of the teacher by his students	3.27	1.335
7	5	Lack of appreciation of the teacher by families of his students	3.23	1.382

8	6	Lack of appreciation of the teacher by his family	2.69	1.289
		Social Reasons	3.34	0.954

According to Table (5), "no light is shed on the real role of teachers in social media" (item 2) receives the highest mean of 30.74 regarding the degree of student agreement. It is followed by "the teachers' image in society is not taken seriously" (item 1) with the second highest mean of 300.55 regarding the degree of student agreement. Item 6, which is "lack of appreciation of the teacher by his family" was ranked as the lowest mean of 20.69. This table also shows that the total mean of "social reasons" is 30.34.

"Professional reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati Students to join faculties of education"

Rank	N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	8	The large number of tasks assigned to teachers in schools	3.95	10.105
2	7	There are many problems related to students' discipline in the classroom	3.77	10.154
3	4	Limited room for creativity and innovation in the teaching profession	3.54	1.105
4	3	Lack of opportunities for the teacher to attain self-fulfillment through his work	3.49	1.154
5	1	Increase numbers of students in classrooms	3.45	1.213
6	6	Absence of preparation for graduates of faculties of education to bear the challenges of the teaching profession	3.42	1.160
7	2	Lack of capabilities necessary for the success of the educational process	3.39	1.251
8	5	Weak ability of graduates of faculties of education to deal with students	3.95	1.230
		Professional Reasons	3.77	0.828

According to Table (6), "the large number of tasks assigned to teachers in schools" (item 8) receives the highest mean of 30.95 regarding the degree of student agreement. It is followed by "there are many problems related to students' discipline in the classroom" (item 7) with the second highest mean of 30.77 regarding the degree of student agreement. Item 5, which is "weak ability of graduates of faculties of education to deal with students" was ranked with the lowest mean of 30.27. This table also shows that the total mean of "professional reasons" is 300.54.

"Institutional reasons cause the unwillingness of Emirati Students to join faculties of education"

Rank	N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	4	Increasing the burdens of teaching on the teacher.	3.89	1.196
2	2	Ministry issues arbitrary decisions	3.88	1.128
3	3	Teachers are not taken as decision makers	3.74	1.203
4	8	The large number of problems that teachers encounter with students, such as poor motivation and dealing with their families.	3.65	1.17
5	1	Double standards in educational districts	3.57	1.029
6	6	Teachers are not appreciated for the amount of work they do	3.56	1.279
7	5	Weakness of professional relationships among teachers.	3.25	1.261
8	7	Inappropriateness of educational environments and lack of necessary equipment in schools.	3.19	1.302
		Institutional Reasons	3.59	0.861

According to Table (7), "increasing the burdens of teaching on the teacher" (item 4) receives the highest mean of 30.89 regarding the degree of student agreement. It is followed by "Ministry issues arbitrary decisions" with the second highest mean of 30.88 regarding the degree of student agreement. Item 7, which is "inappropriateness of educational environments and lack of necessary equipment in schools" was ranked with the lowest mean of 30.19. This table also shows that the total mean of "institutional reasons" is 300.59.

"Are there any significant statistical differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the reasons behind the reluctance of Emirati students to join faculties of education due to gender?"

To answer this question of the study, a t-test analysis was conducted to determine whether there are any significant statistical differences in the reasons behind the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education due to gender. The results are shown below:

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Economic Reasons	Male	199	3.51	0.867	-0.409	388	0.6830
	Female	191	3.55	0.830			
Social Reasons	Male	199	3.33	1.017	-0.238	388	0.812
	Female	191	3.35	0.886			
Professional Reasons	Male	199	3.51	0.825	-0.735	388	0.463
	Female	191	3.57	0.833			
Institutional Reasons	Male	199	3.53	0.886	-1.354	388	0.177
	Female	191	3.65	0.832			
Total Score	Male	199	3.47	0.810	-0.759	388	0.449
	Female	191	3.53	0.735			

According to Table (8), there are no significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) in all the above stated reasons, behind the reluctance of Emirati students to join faculties of education due to gender.

“Are there any significant statistical differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the reasons behind the unwillingness among Emirati students to join faculties of education due to stream variable/different study paths?”

To answer this question of the study, means and standard deviations of reasons behind the unwillingness among Emirati Students to join faculties of education due to stream variable/different study paths were computed as shown below:

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Economic Reasons	General	207	3.56	0.817
	Advanced	157	3.52	0.850
	Vocational	26	3.32	1.067
	Total	390	3.53	0.848
Social Reasons	General	207	3.30	0.920
	Advanced	157	3.38	0.965
	Vocational	26	3.40	1.160
	Total	390	3.34	0.954
Professional Reasons	General	207	3.57	0.804
	Advanced	157	3.55	0.832
	Vocational	26	3.21	0.951
	Total	390	3.54	0.828
Institutional Reasons	General	207	3.58	0.856
	Advanced	157	3.63	0.838
	Vocational	26	3.47	1.048
	Total	390	3.59	0.861
Total Score	General	207	3.50	0.751
	Advanced	157	3.52	0.770
	Vocational	26	3.35	0.972
	Total	390	3.50	0.774

According to Table (9), there is a slight variance in means and standard and deviations of the reasons behind the unwillingness among Emirati students to join the faculties of education due to stream variable/different study paths. To determine whether there are significant statistical differences in these means, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and the results are shown below:

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

Economic Reasons	Between Groups	1.398	2	0.699	0.971	0.379
	Within Groups	278.488	387	0.720		
	Total	279.886	389			
Social Reasons	Between Groups	0.662	2	0.331	0.363	0.696
	Within Groups	353.187	387	0.913		
	Total	353.849	389			
Professional Reasons	Between Groups	3.056	2	1.528	2.240	0.108
	Within Groups	263.942	387	0.682		
	Total	266.997	389			
Institutional Reasons	Between Groups	0.579	2	0.290	0.389	0.678
	Within Groups	287.754	387	0.744		
	Total	288.333	389			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.659	2	0.330	0.550	0.578
	Within Groups	232.119	387	0.600		
	Total	232.778	389			

According to Table (10), there are no significant statistical differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in the means of all the above stated reasons behind the unwillingness among Emirati students to join faculties of education due to stream variable.

DISCUSSION

Qualitative Data Analysis

Theme 1: Parental Influence on Student Career Path Decisions

Interviews revealed that parents have a significant impact on their children's career path decisions. Answers provided by the interviewees revealed two general types of parental influence on children's career path decisions: direct and indirect. In UAE culture, much like the rest of the Arab world, there are culturally "acceptable" and "unacceptable" fields. Parents have adopted certain beliefs about success; what constitutes a "good job" or an "ideal life". For example, medicine and engineering are traditionally considered as career paths that are "respectable" or "reputable", whereas pursuing a career in the arts is considered the lesser path or "the easy way out". Traditional gender roles also play an important role in determining the type of career path that parents support. Women, for example, are limited to career paths that are less laborious and potentially more conservative than other types of careers *i.e.*, teaching or a desk job. Men are less inclined to be limited by such obstacles in most Middle Eastern cultures. Women are also expected to consider their family life as a priority and to ensure that no job is too "time consuming" for them.

Parents are also believed to have an indirect influence on their children's careers. Children are naturally regarded as impressionable beings that gain inspiration or guidance from their direct environments. As a result, they often look to their role models to help shape how they act, communicate, and decision make. Their role models, usually embodied by their parents or care givers, act as an indirect influence in structuring their life path and guiding them in their career. For instance, it is quite common to see that many generations of a certain family work in the same profession. This is usually because they have an insider's glimpse into their parents' occupation and inner workings of that career path, making it easier for them to make their way into the industry, especially if these jobs provide a pleasant lifestyle and offer ample satisfaction.

Theme 2: Parental Awareness of the Country's Needs and Vision

Interviews revealed that parents are not very aware of the country's needs and vision in general, and more specifically in the educational sector. Answers revealed that parents are generally unfamiliar with the country's needs and the demands of the modern marketplace. This discourages them from supporting their children in pursuing certain careers. Technological advancements and time have both contributed to the development of new career paths that are unfamiliar to older generations *i.e.*, social media analyst. Traditional jobs such as teaching have also been affected and morphed with time to keep up with modern demands. These days, the educational sector has newer teaching methods, more courses, and better positions. Parents' lack of awareness about these changes in potential careers may lead to disappointing results. Another important point to note is that parents are unaware about the country's educational needs and vision in specific. The UAE has a huge deficit in Emirati teachers in the country, but to fulfill its 2030 vision, new Emirati educators must be hired to provide students with a culturally sensitive and relatable educational experience, all of which pours into a better educational system.

Theme 3: Parental Cultural Background and General Opinion of their Son/Daughter being a Teacher

Interviews revealed that the cultural background of parents has a huge impact on their children's career path. They also revealed that the teaching job is highly respected and admired by the culture of the United Arab Emirates and considered an "honorable" profession. However, when it comes to a more personal decision, parents tend to not support their children in pursuing it. This is due to many reasons, all of which can be summarized in the fact that teaching is not as economically profitable, professionally advantageous, or even as socially prestigious as other fields. It is also believed that the profession does not provide much room for personal and professional growth *i.e.*, work promotions and pay raises. In addition to the lack of monetary and professional incentive, being a teacher is often coupled with a negative connotation. The overarching sentiment throughout the interviews was that teaching is a generally "difficult" job with more "give than take".

Theme 4: Reasons for Unwillingness to Join Faculties of Education

In addition to the previously mentioned reasons of parental influence, culture, and the lack of incentivization in education from many aspects, answers provided by students highly advocated for personal choice. Students nowadays are less influenced by their parents and are more in touch with their passions. Students expressed a major lack of interest in the field of education. Modern advancements in different careers allow students more options. These options translate as more "fulfilling", "interesting", "lucrative", and "fun" jobs. Many of the students already had a clear idea about who they wanted to become and what they wanted to do.

Theme 5: Influences on the Decision-Making process of Choosing a Career

Interviews revealed that there is no recipe or single common mechanism that the students follow in choosing a career. Students reiterated that they may get "inspired" by their parents to choose a certain career. Others emphasized that they are allowed the complete freedom to choose what they want to do with their lives. Some of the commonalities that the students expressed included "success", "money", "lifestyle", "meaning", "passion", and "convenience". These terms

can reveal that the modern-day student is looking for a career that provides as much of intangible benefit as it does tangible benefit. They are still looking for success and financial stability, but today's youth are also searching for meaning.

Theme 6: Potential Solutions that could have encouraged them to choose Education over other Fields

Students seem to have plenty to say about what the educational system is lacking. Many of the opinions that they have seem to be based on stereotype rather than actual fact. Interviews revealed that students and parents alike view the educational sector as generally lacking in many areas as previously mentioned. The students described “more money” and “higher standard of living” as two solutions to the problem. In other words, they want to do less and make more than what the educational sector currently offers. Other answers provided requested that the country increase efforts in easing the life of the educator and in raising awareness and improving the educator's social standing.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Results of the quantitative survey revealed that institutional reasons have the biggest impact on students' unwillingness to join the educational sector, followed by professional reasons, economic reasons, and social reasons respectively. This discovery does not align with some of the findings that were revealed from the qualitative data. Interviewees, both parents and students, seemed to focus a lot on the professional, economic, and social aspects, more so than institutional. When viewing the list, however, institutional burdens seemed to matter to the interviewees more than anything else. This idea reveals that some reforms in the educational system alone can create a significant impact on the unwillingness of students to join the educational sector. Another discrepancy in the results is the perceived importance of the social burdens of being a teacher. People openly expressed that being a teacher is not socially prestigious and seemed to give the idea a lot of importance, but when presented with the quantitative list, students gave value to their economic and professional concerns more so than social issues. This idea reveals that the professional and financial incentivization of the educational field, following some institutional reforms, can sway public opinion and encourage students to join the field. The general social and cultural stereotype of teachers may naturally change once the former burdens are addressed and more people begin to embrace the field.

From an institutional standpoint, public perception of education seems to be one of difficulty. This discovery aligns with results revealed from the qualitative data, as interviewees kept circling back to the idea that teaching was too difficult. The item that ranked the highest in the institutional list involves the increasing burdens of the teaching job. People seem to believe that as teachers, you will always give more than you take. The next items on the list highlight responsibility and decision-making power as two considerations that are heavily lacking in a teacher's job. People believe that as a teacher, you do not have the capacity to make change. These concerns go back to the entire educational system and the leverage it allows teachers. Other institutional burdens include problems that teachers encounter with students, double standards in the field, lack of appreciation, weakness of professional network, and general inappropriateness of educational environments.

Analysis of the professional reasons supports results that appeared in the institutional list as well as qualitative results. All of the results directly relate education to difficulty. The item that ranked the highest in the list involves the workload that teachers receive in schools. The second

item on the list involves student-teacher relationships and the lack of respect that students may exhibit with teachers. This problem is heavily embedded in the overall societal image of a teacher. The third and fourth item on the list involve the teacher's incapability of being creative and innovating in a school setting, in the hopes of attaining personal fulfillment. This again related back to the entire educational system and the freedom and leverage it allows teachers. Other professional burdens include large number of students in classrooms, lack of preparation of new educators to face real life challenges, lack of capabilities necessary for the success of the educational process, and the inability of new educators to deal with students.

As revealed through qualitative data analysis, the items that scored the highest on the economic reasons list are the opportunity for bonuses and promotions in the teaching profession, the financial opportunity that other professions in the private sector offer, low rewards, and low salaries respectively. Students align success with money and consider it a priority to strive for financial stability in their careers. The educational profession is very clearly perceived as a low-paying job. Financial incentivization can absolve much of the unwillingness of students to join the sector. The next items on the economic reasons list include lack of overseas opportunities for secondment, lack of investment in teacher skills and training, lack of investment in providing educational aids in schools, and the lack of healthcare services provided to teachers.

Contrary to qualitative results, quantitative analysis revealed that social reasons are the least effective from the list. That being said, society's image of the teacher plays a major role in the parental perception of teaching jobs and their lack of support for them. The items that scored the highest on the social reasons list is that no light is shed on the true role of teachers in the society and that teachers are just not taken seriously. It is the educational system's responsibility to invest the time, money, and effort in raising public awareness about the importance of educators, as well as the national need for them to fulfill the 2030 vision. The next item on the list involves the lack of recognition and moral incentives for teachers to continue doing what they are doing. Respect for teachers must be re-established in most Arab societies. The next items on the list include restrictions posed on teachers as well as lack of communication between teacher and ministry, which both directly correlate with institutional issues. The final three items shed light on the general lack of appreciation for the teacher by the students, the students' families, and by their own families.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The hopes and prospects of future generations are built on two foundations: robust educational systems and nurturing home environments. One of these foundations is currently at risk. The United Arab Emirates is suffering from a major deficit in Emirati educators in the educational field. Due to the lack of enrollment, many universities closed their education colleges. In addition, the UAE has an ambitious educational vision for 2030, but that vision cannot be achieved without some reforms in the field. This study explored the reasons behind the unwillingness of Emirati students to join faculties of education. It also explored solutions to encourage new students to join the field as well as existing practitioners to remain in it. Results revealed that in the UAE, parental influence and cultural background heavily influence the Emirati students' career path choices. Lack of awareness of the UAE's educational vision and potential cause unwillingness of Emirati students to join educational faculties. Results also revealed that institutional reasons have the biggest impact on students' unwillingness to join the educational sector, followed by professional reasons, economic reasons, and social reason. To change that, the UAE needs to raise awareness about its needs and vision for the educational sector, as well as establish a newfound social respect for the profession. More importantly, the it needs to make institutional reforms by allowing teachers more

freedom to innovate and make change, and by enhancing communication between all parties involved in the educational sector. Professional and economic incentives for teachers may just sway the new generation into a new era.

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