

Learning a Bayesian structure to model entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes towards business creation among Emirati Youth

Linda Smail

Zayed University, College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Linda.smail@zu.ac.ae

Mouawiya Alawad

Zayed University, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Wasseem Abaza

Zayed University, College of Business, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Firuz Kamalov

Canadian University Dubai, Department of Electrical Engineering, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Hamdah Alawadhi

Zayed University, College of Business, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Summary

The vision of the UAE National Youth Agenda is to equip the young Emiratis with the necessary resources to be “*Productive youth with an entrepreneurial spirit who realize their full potential and embody Emirati values*”. Furthermore, the Federal as well as the local strategies strive to infuse an entrepreneurial culture in schools and universities to foster generations endowed with leadership, creativity, responsibility, and ambition. This will allow the UAE to be among the best

in the world in the ease of doing business, innovation, entrepreneurship, and R&D indicators. For these above-mentioned reasons, entrepreneurship is now considered as an essential element to be incorporated in the curriculum offered by higher education institutions in the UAE. Intentions and attitudes toward entrepreneurship have become crucial factors that explain entrepreneurial behavior in recent entrepreneurship research.

Although the entrepreneurial attitude is not a new phenomenon it has always been studied using the generic entrepreneurial intention models. We propose in this research a newer and more innovative method to study entrepreneurial intention using Bayesian networks (BNs) that have advantages compared to classical methods by using AI techniques. BNs are a set of statistical methods used to model problems, extract information, and make decisions. Assessing students' attitudes using the latest AI technologies can lead to the development of targeted programs to cultivate the entrepreneurial mindset amongst the Emirati students. Our research will also help UAE universities enhance their current programs or develop innovative programs to advance the entrepreneurial spirit among female students, as a key driver of success and a main factor to reduce the fear of failure that usually limits them from pursuing their ambitions to be entrepreneurs.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among a random sample of 324 Emirati youth recruited from a local university. We used BNs learning algorithms to build the model representing relationships among the study scales. The BN output is based solely on the collected data and no expert knowledge was used to determine any type of association between the variables.

Entrepreneurial intentions are highly affected by attitude, self-efficacy, subjective norms, and opportunity feasibility. Additionally, attitude is directly affected by subjective norms, therefore the subjective norms variable has an influence on intention which is mediated by attitude.

Furthermore, obstacles and university opportunity feasibility are the variables whose influence on entrepreneurial intention is less. Since Family and Friends' Support has a positive impact on Emirati youth subjective-norms, involving families and friends in programs designed at universities and other entrepreneurial youth hubs may help enhance youth attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The inclusion of families in strategies related to improving students' entrepreneurial intentions will have a strong positive impact to direct the youth towards entrepreneurial activities rather than lining-up for jobs at the government sector.

For full paper: *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development (WJEMSD)* V18 N7, 2022.