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RESEARCH PAPER

Entrepreneurial Fear-of-Failure among the Emirati Youth: An Ordered Logistic Regression Estimation

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: The study investigates the fear of entrepreneurial failure among Emirati university students.

METHODOLOGY: The study surveyed 324 university students with an average age of 20.7 years. The data were analysed using Ordinal Logistic Regression with Proportional Odds to find factors that may provoke the fear of entrepreneurial failure and assess the hypotheses among this group of Emirati youth.

FINDINGS: The results showed that although these young people have a degree of fear of failure, they recognise that entrepreneurial education, social support, understanding of opportunities, and mitigating obstacles can contribute to transforming this fear into reasons to undertake entrepreneurship.

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ORIGINALITY: The paper contributes new insights into the psychological barriers facing young Emirati entrepreneurs and underscores the transformative potential of educational and social interventions.

KEYWORDS: *Entrepreneurship; Fear of Failure; Risk Aversion; Entrepreneurial intentions; Ordered Logistic Regression*

INTRODUCTION

The National Agenda of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) strives to instil an entrepreneurial culture in schools and universities to foster generations endowed with leadership, creativity, responsibility, and ambition. However, the fear of failure (FoF) is one of the most significant obstacles that prevent Emiratis and expats from starting a business. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report 2020/2021 (Bosma *et al*., 2021) found that while 62.1% of adults see good opportunities to start a business in the UAE, around 47.1% would not start a business because of FoF.

Entrepreneurial FoF is a multidimensional construct that involves cognition, effect, and action and can be understood in diverse ways. It can also be associated with risk aversion, a personal trait (Cacciotti *et al*., 2016). FoF and risk aversion have similar effects on the decision to start a business, as they both may lead to suppression of expected returns and negative decision-making outcomes (Koudstaal *et al*., 2016).

On the other hand, FoF can be associated with motivation when a person realises that they may miss an entrepreneurial opportunity because of fear and ends up facing that fear and taking the opportunity (Venkataraman *et al*., 2012). This perspective finds support in the Schumpeterian vision of entrepreneurship, in which the entrepreneur needs to assume risk and responsibility to explore new business opportunities (Schumpeter, 2002). This view also finds support in the psychological approach to fear as a basic emotion inherent to the human condition.

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is widely used to explain behavioural intention (Engle *et al*., 2010) and, therefore, can be utilised as a framework in this study to explain the FoF as a behavioural intention.

The individual variables present in TPB are attitude and perceived behavioural control. The entrepreneurial attitude is the main form of entrepreneurial intention (Kisubi, 2021). It refers to individuals' positive or negative evaluation of the entrepreneurial career and its impact on their interest in starting a business or developing an innovative idea (Ajzen, 1991).

The contextual variable of TBP is the subjective norm; this refers to social influences on choices, including support from family, friends, peers, and institutions (Bouarar and Mouloudj, 2021). This support can positively impact the perceived return on investment and perception of feasibility, encouraging individuals to face fear as a natural part of the entrepreneurial process.

The level of FoF is influenced by the perceived return on investment and support received from close relationships and the country. Greater perceived viability of the business and support results in greater confidence to face fear as a natural part of the entrepreneurial process.

The perception of feasibility is also related to subjective norms in the sense of receiving support from proximal and institutional relationships. When the educational environment is favourable to entrepreneurship, students are more encouraged to pursue this career, as it constitutes a space for learning, experimentation, risk mitigation, motivation, engagement, and new networks.

All of these relationships are important and predict entrepreneurial intention. They positively influence it and can be used to model the behaviours of potential entrepreneurs. As De Blasio *et al*. (2018) pointed out, the empirical literature that investigates entrepreneurial risk aversion is also recent; there is also a lack of empirical evidence on the motivating role of FoF in companies (Hunter *et al*., 2021; Smail *et al*., 2022; Paranata *et al*., 2023). This study contributes and helps to bridge the gap in this literature as it investigates the relationships between these contextual and individual variables.

Only a few studies have focused on the FoF in entrepreneurship (Cacciotti *et al*., 2016). By accepting the influential capacity of environmental circumstances, FoF is considered a stable disposition. As entrepreneurship is a dynamic field, Cacciotti *et al*. (2016) reconceptualised the FoF beyond a static perspective, as it involves financial security, personal ability, idea viability, motivation, and commitment, among other individual and contextual aspects.

Environmental insecurity and the feeling of failure are unpleasant and are not well evaluated by society and close relationships. However, Gurbuz *et al*. (2017) argue that failure is essential and necessary for learning how to manage failures. This is because failures often go unlearnt without experience and are not taught in educational spaces. In addition, fear may contribute to the decision-making process, as it promotes a better assessment of possibilities and ways to avoid unwanted consequences.

Previous research shows that the FoF can lead to the adoption of entrepreneurial strategies when the entrepreneur believes they can improve their financial situation through entrepreneurship (Hunter *et al*., 2021). This fear can manifest before starting a business and during the entrepreneurship process in response to challenges threatening the venture's viability (Cacciotti *et al*., 2016). The degree of fear may also depend on the perceived return on investment. Greater belief in business viability, support from close relationships, and courage to face fear can lead to viewing fear as a natural part of the process.

Casson and Della Giusta (2007) have found that the role of networks in transmitting these values affects the motivation to become an entrepreneur. Studies (Ferreira *et al*., 2021) have also shown that the subjective norm predicts students' entrepreneurial intentions, indicating it is a measure that can explain the tendency to overcome FoF among young people.

According to Ferreira *et al*. (2017), countries' cultural characteristics can impact the effectiveness of subjective norms. In individualistic cultures, social support may not have as much influence as in collectivistic cultures. However, both cultures require proximal and distal relationships, as individuals are social beings who need to build networks, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship where a network of contacts can affect opportunities, learning, and support.

The educational environment can foster the development of entrepreneurial skills, including risk management and the FoF. Overcoming and/or attenuating initial fears can be important in academic spaces, as these fears can become motivators for achieving goals (Morgan and Sisak, 2016).

This perspective is supported by a study by Cacciotti *et al*. (2016) that found that, as entrepreneurs focus on ongoing business management, FoF can have a motivating effect leading to greater effort to achieve goals. Entrepreneurial education can bring young people closer to the business reality and demystify paradigms or romanticisation of entrepreneurship, as the association between theory and practice contributes to a more holistic entrepreneurial education and socially engaged citizens (Ferreira *et al*., 2022; Alnassai, 2023).

Studies have found that young university students have an increased entrepreneurial intention after receiving entrepreneurial education such as entrepreneurship courses, technical visits, lectures, and workshops. Furthermore, participation in junior companies and business incubators can facilitate the implementation of classroom learning by easing the execution of content learned, mitigating fears, and facilitating the discovery and exploitation of opportunities (Ferreira *et al*., 2021; Bejinaru *et al*., 2023).

Exploitation of opportunities depends on their expected value and individual and contextual characteristics. For example, individuals with greater access to resources, have more business knowledge and entrepreneurial experience, are more risk-prone, more self-effective, more optimistic, with a greater internal locus of control, more tolerant of ambiguity, and more achievement-seeking, tend to explore more opportunities (Frese and Gielnik, 2014).

A study by Nefzi (2018) found that the fear trait has a high relationship with the perception of risk, and cognitive dimensions such as the perception of certainty mediate this relationship. Risk aversion varies between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. Some studies indicate that risk-tolerant people undertake more, and those who are more averse become employees of an organisation (De Blasio *et al*., 2018). Entrepreneurs typically face higher financial risks and are more exposed to failure than employees of an organisation/venture. This finding is supported by research by Henriquez-Daza *et al*. (2023) who also found that entrepreneurs are more willing to bear uncertainties that involve strategic risk.

Individuals living in favourable socio-economic contexts may be more risk-tolerant and more likely to become entrepreneurs, while those living in high-risk environments may have a low propensity for entrepreneurship (De Blasio *et al*., 2018). Relating contextual variables, such as country support and subjective norms, to individual variables, such as FoF, risk aversion, and self-efficacy, suggests potential new insights in the complex and multi-disciplinary field of entrepreneurship. This research explores the FoF as a phenomenon that can drive entrepreneurial intention and action, rather than just a personal trait.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the theory and the review above, six hypotheses were formulated in this study:

- **Hypothesis 1:** *The more individuals understand entrepreneurship opportunities, the lower is their FoF in pursuing these opportunities*. The literature points out that FoF constitutes a barrier to the entrepreneurial process, as the uncertainty of the future can make people, especially young people, more afraid to follow their dreams (Baluku *et al.*, 2021).
- **Hypothesis 2:** *Higher levels of subjective norm are negatively related to entrepreneurial* FoF *(the higher the level of subjective norm, the lower the fear of entrepreneurial failure)*. Faced with a feeling of positive viability of a business, and support from family, friends, and institutions, people tend to face fear as a form of entrepreneurial opportunity (Cacciotti *et al*., 2016).
- **Hypothesis 3:** *It is also expected that those potential entrepreneurs (ex. students) who perceive more obstacles have higher* FoF *in starting a business*. Potential entrepreneurs or beginners would not have experienced in practice the daily challenges of the business, such as cost management, inventory, purchases, customers, suppliers, partners, etc. (Ferreira *et al*., 2017).
- **Hypothesis 4:** *The greater the skills, knowledge, and experience, the lower is the* FoF *in starting a business*. Entrepreneurial education contributes to the development of skills and competencies aimed at entrepreneurship and several studies have verified that after students receive this type of education, they feel more competent to develop their businesses (Ferreira *et al*., 2022).
- **Hypothesis 5:** *Risk Type is negatively associated with the* FoF; *the riskier the person is, the lower is their* FoF *in starting a business*. It is consensual in the literature that FoF is positively related to risk aversion, being sometimes confused as the same construct (Cacciotti *et al.*, 2016).
- **Hypothesis 6:** *Fear of failure is also expected to be positively correlated with risk aversion*. Thus, the higher the degree of risk aversion, the higher the level of fear of failure. As FoF is associated with risk aversion (Nefzi, 2018), more risk-tolerant people tend not to be afraid of failure.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Participants

This study was conducted at a UAE public university, and the sample consisted of 324 Emirati students who voluntarily completed an online questionnaire. The participants had a mean age of 20.7 years, with a standard deviation of 3.1 years. The majority of respondents were female, accounting for 87% of the sample. Approximately one-third of the students (32.7%) were in their third year of study.

Regarding the distribution across colleges, 37.7% of the students were from the Business and Management College, 26.2% were from the College of Technological Innovation, and 17.9% were from the Natural and Health Sciences College. Additionally, 5.2% of the students were enrolled in

various Masters' programmes. The majority of students (93.2%) were full-time students, without employment, 4.3% were full-time students with full-time employment, and 2.5% were full-time students with part-time employment.

Materials

The survey questionnaire included sections covering socio-economic information, previous exposure to entrepreneurship, assessments of students' perceptions of entrepreneurship, attitudes towards entrepreneurship, opportunities, the university, and UAE entrepreneurial environments, as well as limitations. Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) were used for the response options.

The questionnaire's validity and reliability were ensured through a rigorous process. It was translated into Arabic by a professional translator and checked by a bilingual speaker. Experts evaluated the content validity, and changes were made based on their feedback. The Arabic version demonstrated high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.976$) in a pilot study with 10 students who were not included in the main study for data independence.

Methodology

The collected data were analysed to identify factors that might contribute to the fear of entrepreneurial failure and assess the stated hypotheses among this group of Emirati youth. The data analysis was conducted using Ordinal Logistic Regression with Proportional Odds (OLR) technique implemented in Stata 16 (StataCorp, 2019). This approach was chosen to model the relationships between variables and determine the factors associated with fear of entrepreneurial failure among this group of Emirati youth.

The OLR analysis allows for examining the relationships between the fear of entrepreneurial failure (the dependent variable) and various independent variables, such as socio-economic factors, previous exposure to entrepreneurship, and perceptions of entrepreneurship. The use of proportional odds regression enables the estimation of the cumulative probabilities of different levels of fear of entrepreneurial failure while considering the ordinal nature of the dependent variable.

The analysis aims to identify factors that may contribute to the fear of entrepreneurial failure and test the stated hypotheses. By employing OLR, we can assess the associations between the independent variables and the fear of entrepreneurial failure, while controlling for potential confounding factors.

RESULTS

The FoF was measured with a direct question on a scale of 1 to 5. Higher scores on the FoF scale show a greater FoF in business, with an average of 3.16 (SD = 1.18). The risk aversion (RA) scale was created using eight statements from the questionnaire. Table 1 summarises the variables used in this study.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Coefficients for Main Variables

Variables	No. of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha[a]	KMO[b]	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Fear of Failure (FF)	1	-	-	3.16	1.18	1.0	5.0
Entrepreneurial Education (EE)	11	0.93	0.94	3.58	0.77	1.0	5.0
University Support (US)	15	0.94	0.94	3.53	0.74	1.0	5.0
Country Support (CS)	5	0.89	0.81	3.86	0.84	1.0	5.0
Subjective Norms (SN)	14	0.92	0.90	3.84	0.64	1.0	5.0
Self-Efficacy (SE)	11	0.79	0.81	3.07	0.61	1.4	4.9
Obstacles (OBT)	9	0.86	0.86	3.27	0.72	1.0	5.0
Understanding Opportunities (UO)	3	0.88	0.72	3.80	0.87	1.0	5.0
Family and Friends Support (FFS)	1	-	-	3.99	1.03	1.0	5.0
Risk Aversion (RA)	8	0.72	0.75	2.87	0.54	1.1	4.3

Notes: [a]Cronbach's Alpha (measure of internal consistency) is considered satisfactory to compare groups for values above 0.70, and 0.90 or above is considered a high degree of consistency. [b]Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is suggested to be above 0.65 to support the application of factor analysis.

Source: Constructed by authors

More than half the participants (59.2%) were risk neutral, 6.5% were risk lovers, and the remaining 34.3% were risk averse. Furthermore, when students were asked about their FoF if starting a business, 34.3% agreed that they fear to fail, while 11.1% strongly agreed that they fear to fail, and only 11.4% strongly disagreed. Around 25% of them were undecided.

It was also found that there are moderate to strong correlations between the variables in our model. The results showed that risk aversion was significantly and positively correlated with FoF ($P<0.01$). Significant positive correlations were also found between entrepreneurial education, obstacles, subjective norms, and FoF. A significant negative correlation was also found between obstacles and risk aversion.

Table 2 shows the results of the ordinal logistic regression (OLR) estimations where the Proportional Odds (PO) model was used. The proportional odds assumption means that no independent variable disproportionately affects the dependent variable's specific level. If this assumption is violated, the analysis may rely on other types of ordinal logistic regression models (Bürkner and Vuorre, 2018). The PO model, also called the cumulative logit model, is a generalisation of the binary logistic regression. It predicts the cumulative probability of a case being at or below a given level on the FoF variable.

Table 2: Estimation Results

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coefficient (S.E)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	Odds Ratio
Gender	-0.38 (0.34)	0.68 (0.23)	-0.27 (0.34)	0.77 (0.26)	-0.32 (0.34)	0.73 (0.25)
Age	0.32 (0.31)	1.37 (0.42)	0.31 (0.31)	1.37 (0.43)	0.36 (0.31)	1.43 (0.44)
Age^2	-0.01 (0.01)	0.99 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.99 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.99 (0.01)
Parent Work	0.12 (0.16)	1.13 (0.18)	0.11 (0.16)	1.11 (0.18)	0.12 (0.16)	1.13 (0.18)
GPA (Grade Point Average)	0.30** (0.15)	1.35** (0.21)	0.28* (0.16)	1.33* (0.21)	0.32** (0.16)	1.38** (0.21)
Entrepreneurial Education	-1.89** (0.85)	0.15** (0.13)	-2.54*** (0.88)	0.08*** (0.07)	-2.00** (0.86)	0.13** (0.12)
University Support	2.28** (0.91)	9.79** (8.91)	2.92*** (0.94)	18.47*** (17.31)	2.37*** (0.92)	10.72*** (9.85)
Country Support	-0.30 (0.21)	0.74 (0.15)	-0.34* (0.21)	0.71* (0.15)	-0.34 (0.21)	0.71 (0.15)
Subjective Norms	1.10*** (0.34)	3.02*** (1.02)	1.32*** (0.34)	3.74*** (1.28)	1.10*** (0.34)	2.30*** (1.03)
Self-Efficacy	-0.04 (0.22)	0.97 (0.21)	0.19 (0.23)	1.21 (0.28)	0.08 (0.23)	1.09 (0.25)
Obstacles	1.52*** (0.19)	4.58*** (0.85)	0.99*** (0.22)	2.70*** (0.60)	1.28*** (0.21)	3.58*** (0.74)
Understanding Opportunities	-0.29* (0.17)	0.74* (0.12)	-0.28 (0.17)	0.76 (0.13)	-0.28 (0.17)	0.76 (0.13)
Family and Friends Support	-0.41*** (0.16)	0.66*** (0.10)	-0.40** (0.16)	0.67** (0.11)	-0.36** (0.16)	0.70** (0.11)
Risk Averse			1.14*** (0.28)	3.12*** (0.87)		
Risk Lover					-1.15** (0.52)	0.32** (0.17)
Risk Neutral					-0.62** (0.27)	0.54** (0.15)
χ^2 (p-value)	χ^2 (13) = 137.38 (p-value = 0.000)		χ^2 (14) = 154.71 (p-value = 0.000)		χ^2 (15) = 144.30 (p-value = 0.000)	
Pseudo R^2	0.14		0.16		0.15	

Notes: (*) significant at the 90% level; (**) significant at the 95% level; (***) significant at the 99% level
Source: Constructed by authors

The three models presented in Table 2 differ by the inclusion of the risk types of individuals (risk averse, risk neutral, and risk lover) in the set of predictors; these include gender, age, age square, parent work, GPA, entrepreneurial education, university support, country support, subjective norms, self-efficacy, obstacles, understanding opportunities, and family and friends support. The dependent variable, FoF, has values of an ordered nature.

In Model 1, it can be seen that the full model having our predictors presents a significant improvement in fit compared to the null model, X^2 (13) = 137.38, p-value < 0.0001. Also, as Pseudo R^2 = 0.14, the full model shows a 14% improvement in fit compared to an intercept-only model. Similar significant results were obtained for Models 2 and 3, where Pseudo R^2 increased slightly to 0.16 for Model 2 and 0.15 for Model 3 due to the addition of the risk factor.

In all three models, the GPA, entrepreneurial education, university support, subjective norms, obstacles, and family and friends support are significant predictors of the probability of a case falling into a higher or lower level of FoF.

The positive signs of the GPA coefficient in the three models suggest that students with higher educational accomplishments tend to display higher degrees of FoF. This could be due to their higher knowledge about their limitations, the obstacles, and the risks surrounding starting a new business within their environment compared to other students who have lesser knowledge about the subject. The odds ratios are above one; this means that the odds of having a higher FoF increase with those with higher GPAs compared to other students with low GPAs. For example, in Model 1, the odds of having a higher FoF for a student with a high GPA is 35% above another student with a lower GPA by 1 point.

In the three models, entrepreneurial education displays the expected direction showing that the probability of falling into a higher degree of FoF decreases with more entrepreneurial education. In other words, students with higher levels of entrepreneurial education are less fearful of starting a business. The same result was seen for the family and friends support variable, meaning that the more support the Emirati youth receive from family and friends, the less FoF they face in starting a business. However, the odds ratios are less than one, meaning that the likelihood of falling into a higher degree of FoF decreases with more entrepreneurial education compared to less entrepreneurial education. In Model 1, for example, there is an 85% lower likelihood of reducing the FoF with more entrepreneurial education. Comparable results are seen for family and friends support. In Model 1, there is a 34% lower likelihood of reducing the FoF with more support from family and friends.

The obstacles' coefficient displays the expected positive sign in all three models. As the youth perceive more obstacles, their degree of FoF in starting a business increases. However, both the university support and the subjective norms variables display an unexpected positive association with the degree of FoF. This could be due to the inadequate quality of university support and/or the probable feeling of negative viability of a business. The odds ratios are all above one, and they show the strongest association with FoF compared to other variables in the models. For example, in Model 1, the likelihood of more FoF is more than 4.5 times higher with a higher degree of obstacles.

The risk variables in Models 2 and 3 are all significant, with the predicted association between risk and FoF. In Model 2, individuals with a higher degree of risk aversion display higher levels of FoF. In Model 3, both higher degrees of risk neutrality and, more strongly, risk-loving tend to reduce the degree of FoF. The odds ratio for the risk-averse variable in Model 2 indicates a strong association with FoF. The likelihood of more FoF is more than three times higher with a higher degree of risk aversion. In Model 3, the odds ratios for risk lover and risk-neutral variables are less than one. There are 68% and 46% lower likelihoods of reducing the FoF with more degrees of risk-loving and risk neutrality, respectively.

Understanding opportunities is negatively significant only in Model 1 and shows that students who can understand opportunities have less FoF in starting a new business. The odds ratio implies a 26% lower likelihood of reducing the FoF with more understanding opportunities. Furthermore, the country support variable is a significant negative predictor only in Model 2, showing that the higher the country support, the less FoF in starting a business in students. The odds ratio implies a 29% lower likelihood of reducing the FoF with more country support. Finally, no other socio-economic variables or self-efficacy display significant relationships with FoF.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hypothesis 1, which stated that students who understand entrepreneurial opportunities are less afraid of failure when starting a business, was confirmed to some degree. This is consistent with previous research from Frese and Gielnik (2014) that found more risk-tolerant and optimistic individuals with strong skills and internal locus of control tend to explore more opportunities. Despite a reported FoF among young people in the Emirates (Bosma *et al*., 2021), this study found that FoF did not deter students from starting a business, possibly due to their entrepreneurial education.

The support of family, friends, and the country plays an important role in reducing the fear of starting a business, as confirmed by the findings of this study. This supports Hypothesis 2. The subjective norm, or support from proximal and distal relationships, helps to mitigate the FoF in various ways, including financial, moral, structural, educational, and collaborative support (Ferreira *et al*., 2021). The cultural aspect also plays a significant role, as external support tends to be more effective in collectivist countries. Additionally, a positive perception of the viability of the business can help individuals view fear as an entrepreneurial opportunity (Cacciotti *et al*., 2016). This perception can influence attitudes towards entrepreneurship, such as viewing it as a career that contributes to political, economic, social, and environmental development, and one that has social prestige and allows independence.

The results of this study strongly confirm Hypothesis 3, which posits that the more obstacles students perceive, the greater their FoF in starting a business. A variety of barriers, such as financial, structural, political, and environmental barriers, as well as barriers related to time dedication, instability, responsibility, and lack of skills can discourage young people from entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial education can be a valuable tool in addressing these obstacles by providing students with the skills and knowledge needed to make informed decisions. However, it is important to note that education alone does not guarantee success, but it can help to demystify the romanticised perception of the entrepreneurial career (Morgan and Sisak, 2016). Future studies may investigate the impact of entrepreneurial education on young Emiratis.

Hypothesis 4, which states that the more skills, knowledge, and experience students have, the lower their FoF, is also confirmed by this study. The educational environment can provide students with valuable experiences, such as technical visits, business simulations, participation in junior companies, business incubators, and workshops, that can help reduce FoF.

Hypotheses 5 and 6, which predict a relationship between risk aversion and FoF, are also confirmed by the study. The more risk averse an individual is, the greater their FoF in starting a business. This result aligns with other studies and highlights the discussion of stable environments that provide financial security, and unstable environments that bring uncertainty. This understanding aligns with the study by Sarasvathy (2001), who introduced the distinction between causation and effectuation planning. Causation planning involves developing a structured plan that anticipates risks and potential returns, while effectuation planning involves adapting to changing circumstances and focusing on opportunities rather than risks. Both approaches have merits; a well-structured business plan is crucial, but adapting and redefining goals as opportunities arise is also vital for success. Future studies can investigate the cultural differences of countries concerning the fear of entrepreneurial failure.

The key findings of this study have significant implications for policy-makers, educators, and stakeholders involved in fostering entrepreneurship among Emirati youth. First, it highlights the importance of entrepreneurial education in reducing the fear of entrepreneurial failure and encouraging students to explore opportunities. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritise the development of entrepreneurial programmes and initiatives that equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences to navigate the challenges of starting a business. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of social support, including support from family, friends, and the country, in mitigating the fear of failure. Policy-makers should focus on creating an enabling environment that promotes supportive networks, mentoring programmes, and financial assistance to empower aspiring entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the identification of perceived obstacles and their impact on the fear of failure suggests the need for targeted interventions to address these barriers. Strategies such as providing resources, guidance, and mentorship to overcome challenges can enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy and reduce the perceived risks associated with entrepreneurship. Finally, considering the gender difference in fear of entrepreneurial failure, further research exploring the unique experiences and barriers faced by female entrepreneurs can inform gender-specific policies and support mechanisms. Overall, these findings provide valuable insights for shaping comprehensive entrepreneurship development policies and practices that foster a favourable environment for Emirati youth to embark on entrepreneurial ventures.

CONCLUSIONS

It was possible to verify that the Emirati youth taking part in this research are concerned with entrepreneurial failure. However, they recognise that entrepreneurial education, social support, understanding opportunities, and mitigating obstacles can transform this fear into a reason for not starting a business. As most of the young people in this research are females, future studies may also investigate the gender difference in relation to the fear of entrepreneurial failure.

Despite the limitation of the FoF variable being measured by only one item on the scale, it is recognised that this study contributes to the formulation of educational policies that consider individual aspects, such as the development of technical and emotional skills and contextual aspects. A more holistic view is needed for the training of entrepreneurs and their contributions to the country's development, providing students with the opportunity to experience first-hand the reality of organisational processes and problems in creating new businesses. This reaffirms the importance of formulating and adopting teaching strategies in entrepreneurship supported by field research, theories, and successful learning worldwide.

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Conflicts of Interest/Competing Interests

The authors of this work declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Availability of Data and Material

The datasets analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Authors' Contributions

MA provided guidance regarding the entrepreneurship indicators and the instruments used to assess them, in addition to contributing to the data analysis. LS wrote the introduction and methods, performed the data analysis, and drafted the results. AF wrote the literature review and the discussion part. All authors have read and approved the manuscript.

Ethics Approval

The research and ethics committee of Zayed University approved this study (REC number: ZU20_100_F).

Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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