

Youth's Entrepreneurial Attitudes in Oman

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The aim of this paper was to investigate the perceptions of Omani youth towards entrepreneurial activity, with the view to extend entrepreneurial policies towards youth. The study specifically aims to measure the perceptions of young people towards entrepreneurship through assessing their views about a number of variables. These include their 1) perception of the Oman business environment, 2) the possession of characteristics necessary to start a business, 3) awareness of business opportunities, 4) access to social networks and willingness to risk to starting a business. As the study focuses on young people in Oman, the sample study was conducted among the university students in Oman at Sohar University, Sohar; Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat; the University of Nizwa; Buraimi University, Buraimi; and Sur University College. The study used a structured questionnaire and interview approaches to investigate youth perceptions on entrepreneurship in Oman. The sample survey conducted during March –April 2012. The study sample consists of 250 students from 5 universities/colleges in Oman. The study incorporated descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. The findings of the study show that a majority of respondents have a positive attitude towards doing business. The major finding of the study is 67% of respondents intend to start a business in Oman. We suggest therefore that an "entrepreneurial culture is common in Oman and among Omani youth. A very important finding is that more females (66% of the total were women respondents) are enthusiastic about their participation in starting a business. There was some perception of caution regarding entrepreneurial activity revealed by the study especially in the area of perceptions about the Omani Business Environment and awareness about business opportunities for example, More than 60% of the respondents think that 'it is too risky to start a business in Oman Another remarkable finding is that 60% of the respondents do not know whether government support to start a business is available in Oman. Moreover, 47% of respondents are of the opinion that they do not know the available opportunities. This study shows us that many youths are very neutral about their feeling towards entrepreneurial intentions. They are not ready to give their opinion on what is their need or what they lack to become entrepreneurs. The study suggested that the Government can act to develop a better communication system to improve information flows among stakeholders. Young entrepreneurs need to be given updates through the organization of workshops and conferences in related trades for better developmental plans, implementation, and control of their ventures. There is a need for support from the government in diverse areas related to supportive policies, financial support, professional education, and training.

1. Introduction

An entrepreneur is one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying significant opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalize on them (Scarborough, 2008). The French economist Richard Cantillon is generally recognized with being the first to think up

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the phrase in the context of what we view today as entrepreneurship in about 1730. He defined entrepreneurs as risk takers, in the sense that they purchased goods at certain prices in the present to sell at uncertain prices in the future. Entrepreneurs attempt to forecast and act upon change within markets. The entrepreneur is a bearer of uncertainty (Cantillon, 1755). The entrepreneur bears the uncertainty of market dynamics (Knight, 1921, 1942). This paper aimed to look at the entrepreneurial attitudes of youths in Oman, accomplished it through a sample study conducted among 250 students in different universities in Oman. The paper got a conceptual framework through previous literatures. Previous studies used many variables, internal or external, to define the entrepreneurial attitudes, while this paper incorporated both internal and external factors to know about youth entrepreneurial attitudes. Furthermore, this study used different sub - factors which are suitable to the country/place value of the study sample.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship has received much attention from both scholars and policy makers during the past decades because there is a growing need in many countries for entrepreneurs to enhance economic growth and development. Entrepreneurial activities provide employment opportunities and increase competitiveness (Reynolds, 1987; Zahra, 1999). Policy makers and scholars around the world are trying to learn how they can stimulate entrepreneurial activities as well as understand why some people choose entrepreneurial careers and others do not. Entrepreneurial behavior can be looked at from either internal or external viewpoints of an individual.

2.1 Internal Approach to Entrepreneurship

The internal viewpoint looks at the personality traits of an individual such as, locus of control, risk taking, need for achievement, problem solving, innovation, creativity perception and work values in relation to entrepreneurial activity. Many social scientists have different views about entrepreneurial intentions of people and diverse studies focus on the effect of personality characteristics on attitudes towards entrepreneurial activities (Bonnett&Furnham, 1991).

Although the results vary across the studies, these studies do indicate a link between entrepreneurial intention and some personality factors. These include self- confidence; risk taking ability; the need to achieve and locus of control. Other researchers have sought the entrepreneurial personality in risk-taking propensity; internal locus of control; tolerance for ambiguity; over-optimism, and need for autonomy (Delmar, 2000). McClelland (1961) says that entrepreneurs are persons who have a high need for achievement. McClelland goes on to explain that, individuals with a high need to achieve will exhibit entrepreneurial behavior. Rotter (1989) developed the concept of locus of control as a force responsible for an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur. In addition, he says that individuals with a high internal locus of control are more likely to become entrepreneurs, than those of high external locus of control. According to Bird (1998), entrepreneurial actions can be classified as an intentional behavior. Yin Miao and Z. Ying (2008) have studied the effects of entrepreneurial traits on entrepreneurial orientation. He identified entrepreneurial traits as need for achievement, risk propensity and locus of control. The dimensions of

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entrepreneurial orientation include innovativeness, risk taking and proactiveness. Their finding indicates that entrepreneurial traits positively affect entrepreneurial orientation. Yonca and Atsan,(2006) in their research work on “The entrepreneurial characteristics of Turkish university students ” explored the entrepreneurship orientation by comparing entrepreneurially inclined students with non-entrepreneurially inclined students. Their study indicated that except for tolerance for ambiguity and self-confidence, all entrepreneurial traits are found to be higher in entrepreneurially inclined students, as compared with not so inclined students. That is, entrepreneurial students found to have higher risk taking propensity, higher internal locus of control, a higher need for achievement and higher innovativeness. Wang and Wong, (2000) have done a study on the entrepreneurial spirits of university students in Hong Kong and Singapore. The study concentrated specifically on the role of some personality characteristics including risk taking propensity; tolerance of ambiguity; internal locus of control; innovativeness; independences, and motivational factors (love for money, desire for security, and desire for status) rather than the differences in the contextual factors. The study of Henderson and Roberson (2000) also provides a useful insight into perception of young adults towards entrepreneurship. The study shows that the respondents perceived entrepreneurship mostly from the view of innate characteristics. Still most of them thought that entrepreneurial traits should be also nurtured by external factors.

2.2 External Approach to Entrepreneurship

The external viewpoint examines things like, culture, role models, work experiences, education and environment. David McClelland (1961) argued that some societies have cultural attitudes which translate into primary socialization practices that foster entrepreneurial individuals. Some studies take into account the relation between entrepreneurial attitudes and cultural, social, economical, political, demographical, contextual and situational factors. (Hisrich, 1990; Wennekess & Thurik, 1990).Kets De Vries (1985) has a view that family background and work experiences are significant in forming an entrepreneurial personality. He says that individuals who have gone through hardship in childhood form an aggressive behavior that forces them to start their own enterprises, instead of being employed by others. Timmons (1990) refers entrepreneurial behavior as a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity-directed, and leadership-balanced. He acknowledged that the entrepreneurship personality can be either acquired or inborn. Busenitz, Gomez, Spencer (2000) break down the factors which can affect attitudes towards entrepreneurial activities into regulatory factors (e.g. institutions and policies); cognitive factors (e.g. knowledge of how to start ventures and obtain financial support); and normative factors (e.g. the perception of entrepreneurship as a career); which were used to explain both types and levels of entrepreneurship in different countries. Begley et al. (1997) compared the role of social- cultural factors on attitudes towards entrepreneurial activities in a four dimensional model. The study indicated that only social status of entrepreneurs might be predicted as factor to start a business. Barnett (1993) after studying more than 70 viewpoints of scholars on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship concluded that it is not easy to come up with a consensus definition from the literature. It is people's experience, knowledge and commitment that influence their decisions to become entrepreneurs and these factors have roots in their behaviors and attitudes. Luthje and Franke (2003) produced a model with contextual factors affecting attitudes towards entrepreneurial activities. The study reveals that the attitude toward self employment might be linked to two

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contextual factors (perceived barriers and perceived support). In the study of Turker et al (2005), contextual factors (perceived level of education, opportunities and support) were examined in relation to entrepreneurial attitudes of university students. The study found that perceived level of support was a statistically significant factor. Garavan and O'Connell, (1994) points out that education and entrepreneurial training are more important in order to enhance entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, many previous studies indicate a link between entrepreneurship and education (Galloway & Brown, 2002; Gorman and Hanlon, 1999; Hederson and Robertson, 2000; Kulvereid and Moen 1997). Furthermore, a study by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2001) indicated that people with limited education are less likely to participate in entrepreneurial initiatives. Since the education offered by a university generally influences the career selection of students, universities can be seen as potential sources of future entrepreneurs. Hill (1988) argues that the scope and structure of entrepreneurial education is different in different context. Another study by Turker and Selcuk (2009) which had taken a sample of 300 university students in Turkey using the entrepreneurial support model, considers the impact of contextual factors on entrepreneurial intentions. The model says that an entrepreneurial intention is a function of educational, relational and structural supports. The study finding shows that education and structural support factors affect the intentions of students.

Wang and Wong (2004) did a study on the entrepreneurial attitudes of students in Singapore based on personal background. The study reveals that gender, family, business experience and education level are significant factors in explaining entrepreneurial attitudes. This study has limited by not giving any idea about how business environment, social network and government support factors affects the entrepreneurial attitudes of students. On the same time, Tung Moi (2011) has done a study on Malaysian university students to find out their entrepreneurial intentions. The study has provided new insight to understand the factors which affect the young adults' entrepreneurial intentions. The results emphasize again the importance of attitudes, education, academic major and family role models on the entrepreneurial intention of young adults. The study has provided valuable implications to the academicians, educators and policy makers. In their cross cultural study, Lee et al (2005) investigated the differences in the attitudes of university students toward entrepreneurial activities in four countries. The study revealed that in each country can think about tailored entrepreneurial education to foster entrepreneurship considering their unique cultural contexts. Autio et al (1997) and Veciana et al (2005) analyzed entrepreneurship among university students in which they checked the robustness of entrepreneurial intention in various cultural contexts. The study indicated that the image of entrepreneurs and encouragement from the university environment affects the entrepreneurial attitudes of university students. The study of Veciana et al (2005) tested the desirability, feasibility and internality for entrepreneurship according to gender and entrepreneurial history of students. The study reveals that the respondents had favorable perception of desirability toward entrepreneurship however their perceptions of feasibility however were not positive and so their intentions were relatively low. In a cross-cultural study Parrenll et al (1995) compared the entrepreneurial propensity of American and Egyptian university students. In their study, entrepreneurial propensity was taken as a function of perceived level of education and perceived opportunities. The study revealed that the entrepreneurial propensities of American students were greater than Egyptians students. Henderson and Robertson, (2000) in their study "Who wants to be an entrepreneur? Young adult attitudes to

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entrepreneurship as a career” examined the attitudes towards entrepreneurship as a career in UK. Their finding suggests that generally positive images of entrepreneurship are hampered by a 1)lack of identifiable role models, 2) poor media presentation of individuals or small firms, 3)lack of encouragement from important influencers on career choice such as teachers and career guidance specialists. Kapitsa (2011) have done a study on youth entrepreneurial development and perceived that once youth are given enough resources, they could easily establish and successfully run a business enterprise. So, they perceived that the major obstacle to their entrepreneurial activity is the lack of funding. She added that the lack of collateral also prevents many young people from starting- up their own businesses. However, it shows that this is only a part of the problem. The potential of the business idea, in terms of the existing and future demand for products or services, is of great importance as well.

This review of literature shows us that many researchers have taken entrepreneurial activity/attitudes/intentions as the outcome of different factors. Broadly they can be divided into internal or personality factors or external factors. The most frequently used variable is personal traits. Depending on the scope of their study, researchers have used both external and internal viewpoints and contextual and situational factors to explore entrepreneurial culture in a country or group. On the same time these reviews have not incorporated many sub variables which are very crucial to know entrepreneurial attitudes of youths. For example, many have given more importance to personal background rather than external factors like government support and countries’ business environment.

From these reviews, we have come to the focus on our project. We study entrepreneurial intention as a function of entrepreneurial attitudes. Entrepreneurial attitudes are in turn affected by many variables. We have selected five variables which include both internal and external influences on entrepreneurship. These are: the business environment; opportunities to start a business; personal characteristics necessary to start a business; risk taking and use of social networks. These will be discussed detail in the paper.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Background of the Study

This study has taken theoretical support from “theory of planned behavior proposed by Ajzen, 1991, as we are studying ‘attitudes towards entrepreneurship among young people in Oman’. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitude toward the act refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question. Perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior is known as social norms and it is preset to people’s perceptions of what is important in their lives. The theory further explains that background of attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms are linked with human behavior .The theory of planned behavior postulates that behavior is a function of *beliefs* relevant to the behavior. Beliefs determine a person’s attitudes, intentions and behavior (Ajzen, 1991:189).In other sense, people’s behavioral beliefs influence attitudes toward the behavior. We can expect positive and negative outcome from behavior via belief. Therefore, people form favorable attitudes toward behaviors believed to have desirable consequences and negative attitudes toward behaviors associated with undesirable consequences (Ajzen, 1991:191). Perceived behavioral control plays an important role in the theory of Planned Behavior, (Ajzen,

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1991:183). One main assumption of this theory is that a person's resources and opportunities must have an influence on their behavioral achievement. But, of greater psychological interest than the actual control is the perception of behavioral control and its impact on intentions and actions. Perceived behavioral control is defined in the Theory of Planned Behavior as the people's perception on how difficult or ease is to perform the behavior of interest (Ajzen, 1991:183). Perceived behavioral control and control beliefs are connected. Whether necessary resources and opportunities are available is one major component of control beliefs. Beliefs may be associated with past experience with the behavior, but we cannot deny its influence by used information about the behavior; by the experiences of acquaintances and friends; and by other factors that can increase or reduce the perceived difficulty of being perform the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991:196). Moreover, Theory of Planned Behavior stresses that, the relative importance of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in the prediction of intention is different in various behaviors and situations (Ajzen, 1991:188).

This project examines "Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship among Young people in Oman". The purpose of the study is to assess young people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The researchers therefore surveyed (with a structured questionnaire) students from universities in Oman namely 1) Sohar University, Sohar; 2) Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat; 3) the University of Nizwa; 4) Sur University College and 5) Buraimi University. This project is therefore a study concentrating only a sample of 250 students from five universities in Oman. The sample survey conducted during March –April 2012. The review of literature presented shows us that many researchers have attributed entrepreneurial activity/attitudes/intention to be the outcome of different factors. This study incorporated both the internal and external factors identified as fundamental requirements of entrepreneurial activity to examine young people's entrepreneurial intentions. The factors which the study has taken are: business environment, opportunities to start a business, personal characteristics necessary to start a business, perception of risk and access to social networks.

The aim was to seek answers to the following questions:

3.1 What are the Perceptions of Young People towards the Business Environment in Oman?

External viewpoint examines things such as; culture, role models, work experience, education and environment (McClelland, 1961). The aim of this study was to seek young people's perceptions about Omani business environment. This includes features such as:

- 1) Access to credit;
- 2) Access to technology;

3.2 What are the Perceptions of Young People towards the Personal Characteristics Necessary to Start a Business in Oman?

Many social scientists have different views about entrepreneurial intentions of people and different studies focus on the effect of 'characteristics' (external factors) on the attitudes

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towards entrepreneurial activities (Bonnett and Furnham , 1991; Brockhaus,1980; Jonson,1990). The factors which come under characteristics necessary to start a business are:

- 1) Creativity,
- 2) Confidence level,

3.3 Do Young People Have Access to a Social Network of Entrepreneurs?

This study we took “Social networks” as a situational factor. By definition “networks are associations of individuals or groups that facilitate access to information or resources”(Holt,1987).Individual with greater social networks have a improved access to information and resources than individuals with limited social networks. They are, thus likely to recognize opportunities to start a business (Alrich and Zimmer,1986; Singh, 2000). Social networks impact development of entrepreneurial intention indirectly through perceived desirability and perceived feasibility(Linans and Santos,2007).Networking can help entrepreneurs to get needed access and connections that are not available from other sources (Das and Teng,1998; Hansen,1995). The main factors observed under this variable affecting entrepreneurial attitudes are :

- 1) Access to entrepreneurial blogs
- 2) Access to entrepreneurial websites

3.4 How do Young People Perceive Risk in Businesses?

Risk taking considers to be one of the most unique features of entrepreneurial behavior, since creating new ventures is by definition a risky business (Macrimmon and Wehrung, 1986;Yates and Stone,1992). Leibenstein (1968) regards the entrepreneur as the “ultimate uncertainty and /or risk bearer.Existing studies have attempted to single out risk propensity as the sole psychological determinant of entrepreneurial risk behavior (Law and Macmillion, 1988; Kihlstorm and Laffont,1979).The main factors examined under this variable (Risk) affecting entrepreneurial attitudes are :

- 1) Risk factor
- 2) Fear of losing resources;

3.5 Do Young People Recognize Opportunities to Conduct Businesses in Oman?

Timmons (1990) refers to entrepreneurial behavior as a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity directed, and leadership balanced. In a cross- cultural study, Parrenll et al (1995) entrepreneurial propensity was taken as a function of perceived opportunities. Our study examines opportunities to start as two categories of contextual (external) factors:

- 1) Government support,
- 2) Institutional support

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Investigation of these questions was achieved primarily through field surveys involving interactions with students in five universities in Oman. The responses were secured using questionnaires.

4. Findings and Discussions

In this section we first start with the profile of sample respondents. Secondly, we present and discuss over all perception on factors influencing entrepreneurial attitudes which we have collected from respondents using questionnaires .Thirdly, we present respondents views about entrepreneurship in Oman through an interview session.

4.1 Profile of Sample Respondents

Table1. Presents the demographic profile of respondents who took part in this research project. The study covered a total of 250 students from five Universities in Oman. The majority (95.2 %) of the respondents were Omanis. Out of that, the number of female students are more (58%) and most of the respondents are from Faculties of Business. Students were mostly in accounting specialization followed by management specialization. The majority of the respondents (59%) were between 21-25 years old. Many respondents (40%) are in a high income bracket. 90% of respondents are not married and 82% of the respondents are unemployed.

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Table 1: The Respondents' Profile

Nationality	(%)
Omani	95.2
Non-Omani	4.8
Gender:	
Male	41.6
Female	58.4
Age(years)	
Between 15 -20	36.8
Between 21-25	59.2
Between 26-30	1.6
Between 31-35	2
36- and above	0.4
Faculty	
Business and Economics	34
Engineering	13.6
Humanities	24
Information Technology	13.2
Science and pharmacy	15.2
Income	
>500 O.R	40.4
<500 O.R	42.2
<250 O.R	17.2
Marital Status	
Single	90
Married	6.8
Engaged	2
Divorced	.4
Other	.8
Working Status:	
Employed	10
Unemployed	82
Self employed	4.4
Other	3.6

4.2 Over all Perception on Factors influencing Entrepreneurial Attitudes

Keeping in view the study's conceptual framework, the variables in this study that affect attitudes towards entrepreneurship are grouped into number of factors. Each of these variables divided into a number of components measured the attitudes to which were on a five point Likert scale (ranging from 1 as 'strongly agree' to 5 as 'strongly disagree' with 3 in between as a 'neutral stance'.

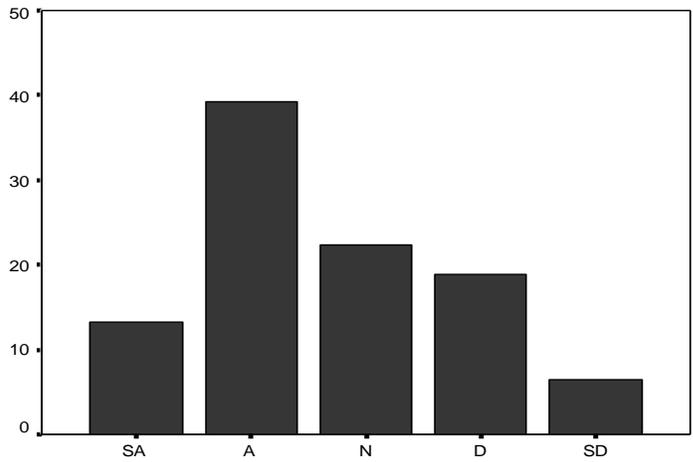
4.2.1 What are the Perceptions of Young People towards the Business Environment in Oman?

There following external factors were examined under the construct of the business environment in Oman. These included: access to credit, access to technology, professional education, information, necessary advice, time for training, institutional advice, Omani culture and values and gender barriers. The respondent’s responses are given below:

Response to statement: There is easy access to credit to start a business in Oman

With regard to their perception about access to credit ,the majority of respondents agreed(39.2%) or strongly agreed(13.2%) that there is easy access to credit. Only 22.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.

Figure 1: Access to credit

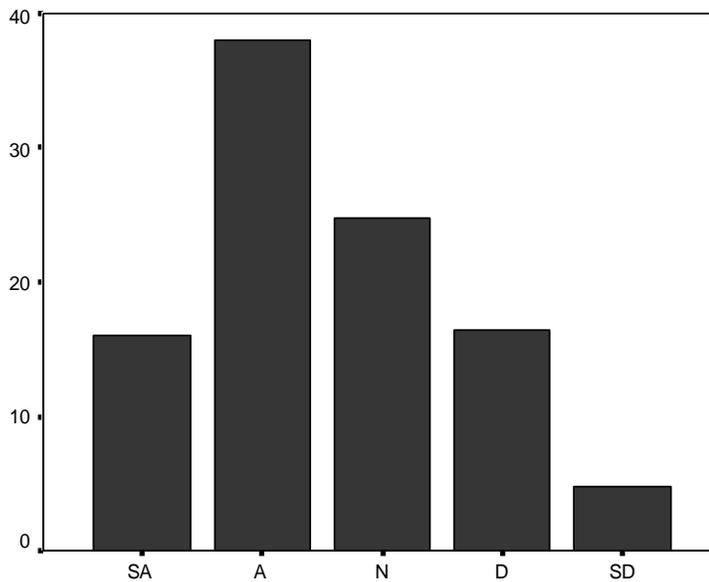


There is an easy access to credit to start a business in Oman

Response to statement: There is easy access to technology is available in Oman to start a business

Altogether 54% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is easy access to technology. Only 21% disagreed with this statement.

Figure 2: Access to technology



Easy access to technology is available in Oman to start a business

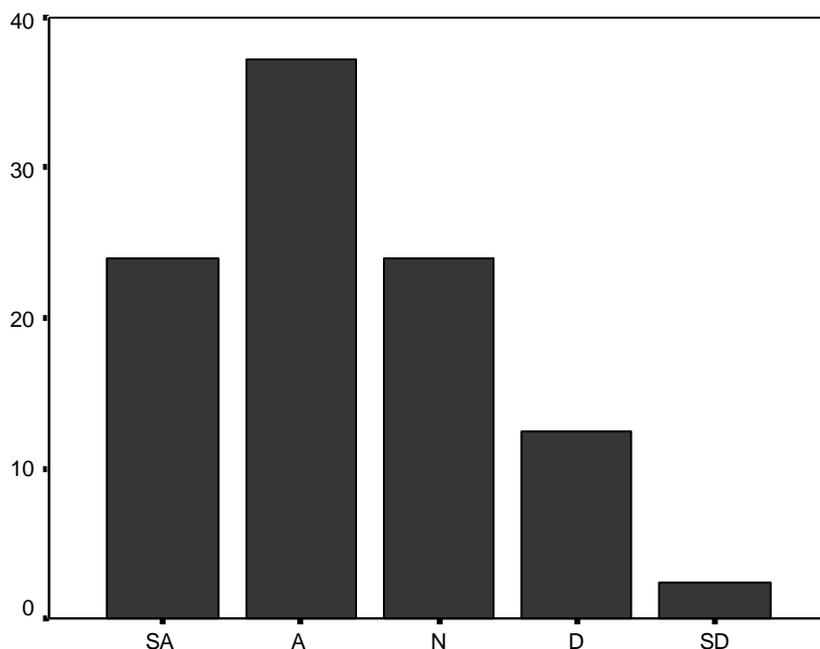
4.2.2 What are the Perceptions of Young People towards the Personal Characteristics Necessary to Start a Business in Oman?

Any person who wants to start a business needs to have some personal characteristics (Internal factor) to start it. The commonly accepted characteristics are: Necessary creativity and self confidence. Here we can see how the survey respondents consider these internal factors.

Response to statement: I have the necessary creativity to propose a good business idea

It seems that respondents believe they (figure.3) are creative. Most of the respondents (61%) are agreed / strongly agreed about their creativity. Only a small number thought they did not possess this attribute.

Figure 3: Creativity

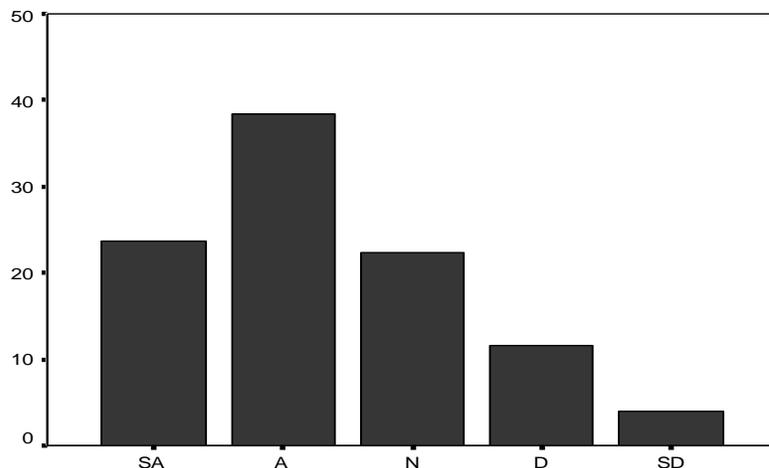


I have the necessary creativity to propose a good business idea

Response to statement: I have enough confidence to run my own business

Just over 60% of respondents agreed that they are confident to start a business. A very small percentage (15.6%) has a different idea. Again, 22.4% is not having any specific opinion to reveal. That means 38% is not confident to start a business in Oman

Figure 4: Confidence level



I have enough confidence to run my own business.

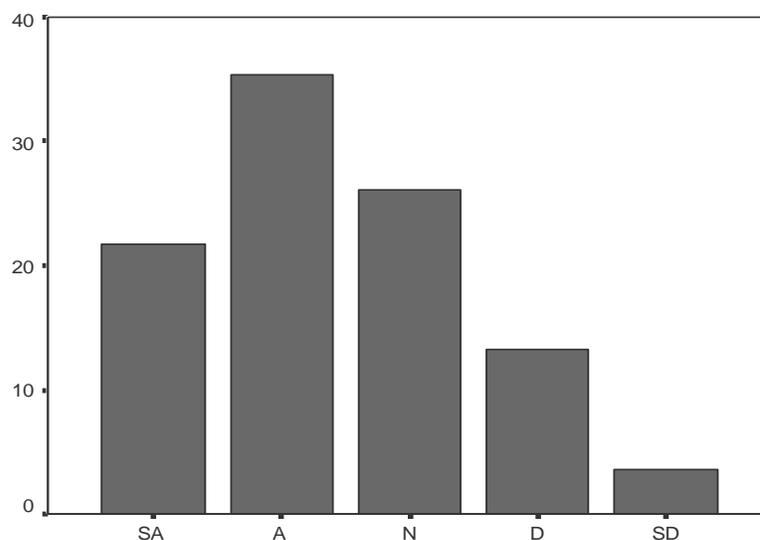
4.2.3 How do Young People Perceive Risk

A review of literature shows that risk and fear of failure are obstacles in the path of entrepreneurship. Risk is considered as an internal factor. Under this heading the researcher wanted to find out some important areas which may be affecting Oman's youth's entrepreneurial behavior. Those are: more risky; fear of losing resources; much competition, and uncertainty of future. Let us elaborate respondent's views about risk to start a business in Oman.

Response to statement: It is too scary to risk starting a business

Figure.6 shows the respondent's ideas about taking risks. 21.6% strongly agreed and 35.2% agreed that it is too scary to risk to start a business in Oman. However many are not sure about their position (either agreed or disagreed).

Figure 5: Risk in starting business

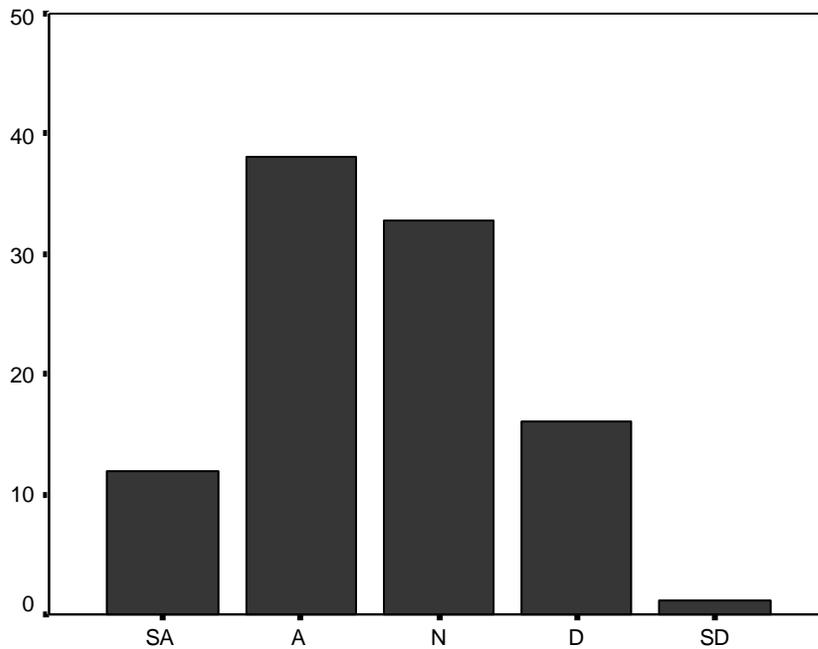


It is too scary to risk starting a new business.

Response to statement: I have fear of losing resources in insecure business idea

Altogether 50% of respondents are strongly agreed or agreed (12% and 38% respectively) with this statement.

Figure 6: Fear of losing resources



I have fear of losing resources in insecure business idea.

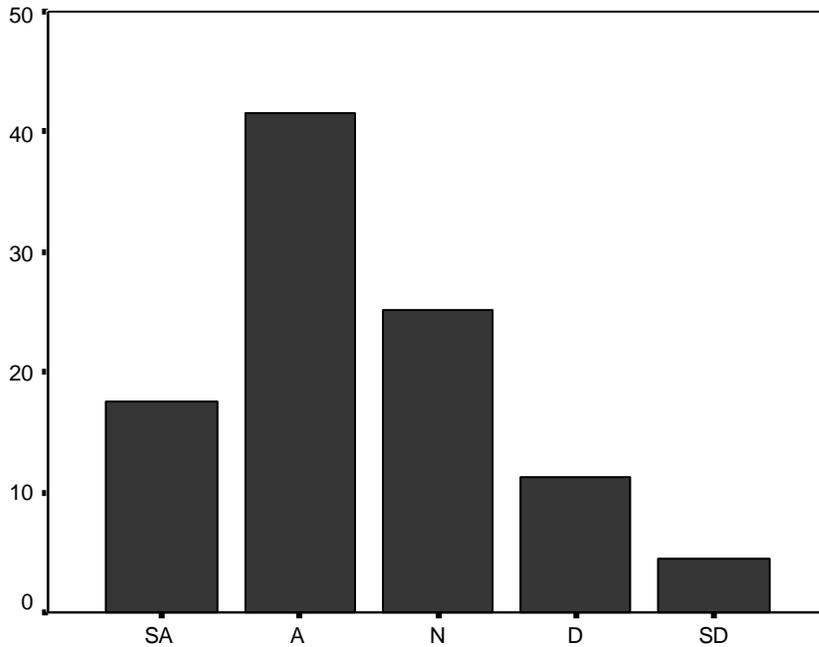
4.2.4 Do Young People Recognize Opportunities to Conduct Businesses in Oman?

One of the main objectives of our study is to know youth perception about available opportunities in Oman to start new businesses. The main supportive areas (external factors) were we have enquired to our survey respondents are: Government support and institutional support.

Response to statement: I do not know whether government support is available to start a business in Oman

Figure.7 shows that more respondents (58%) are agreed or strongly agreed that they do not know whether government support is available to start a business in Oman. Only a small percentage (15%) disagreed/strongly disagreed with this. However, 25% are neutral about this statement.

Figure 7: Government support

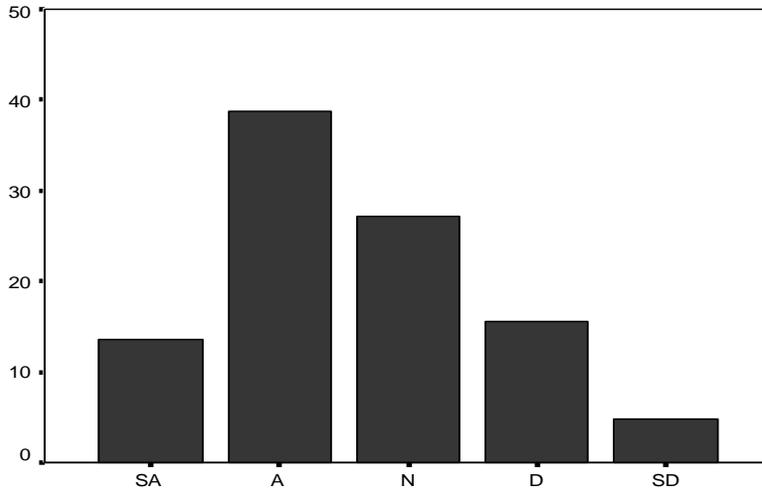


I don't know whether government support is available for entrepreneurs.

Response to statement: Many institutes in Oman support the entrepreneurs.

Figure.8 shows that respondents' idea about opportunities to start a business. More respondents are agreed or strongly agreed (38.8% and 13.6% respectively) on institutional support to start a business. However, 27% of respondents neutral about this statement.

Figure 8: Institutional support



Many institutes in Oman support entrepreneurs.

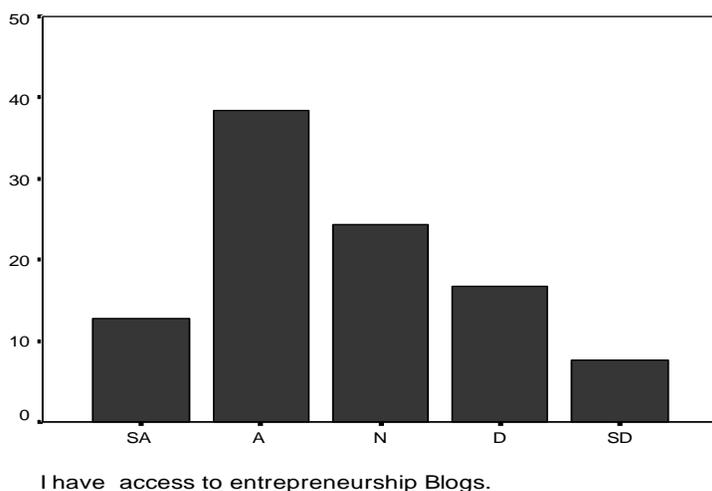
4.2.5 Do Young People Have Access to a Social Network of Entrepreneurs?

Oman seems to be a technologically growing country. At this juncture it is good to know how our survey respondents look at these social network opportunities like: entrepreneurship blogs; entrepreneurship website. Our study takes access to social network as an external factor, mainly a situational factor.

Response to statement: I access to entrepreneurship blogs

Figure.9 shows that more than half of the respondents (around 50.8%) have connection with people through entrepreneurship blogs. Some (24.4%) are neutral about this statement.

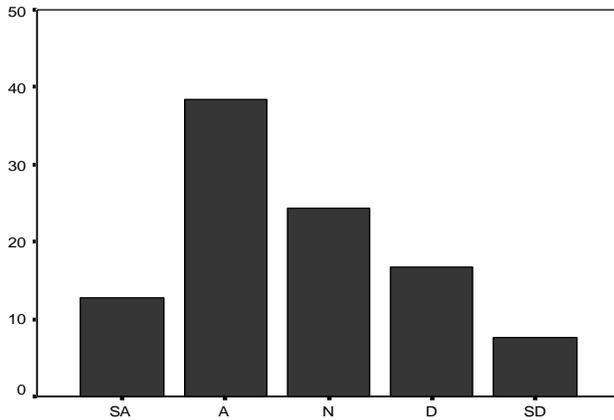
Figure 9: Access to entrepreneurship blogs



Response to statement: I access to entrepreneurship websites

Figure .10 shows that more respondents are agreed or strongly agreed (around 51.6%) on having connection with entrepreneurship websites. On the same time some (23.6%) are not revealing their views favorably (neither agree nor disagree) and few are disagreed with this knowledge.

Figure 10: Entrepreneurship websites



I have access to entrepreneurship Blogs.

4.3 What are the Attitudes of Young People towards Entrepreneurship in Oman?

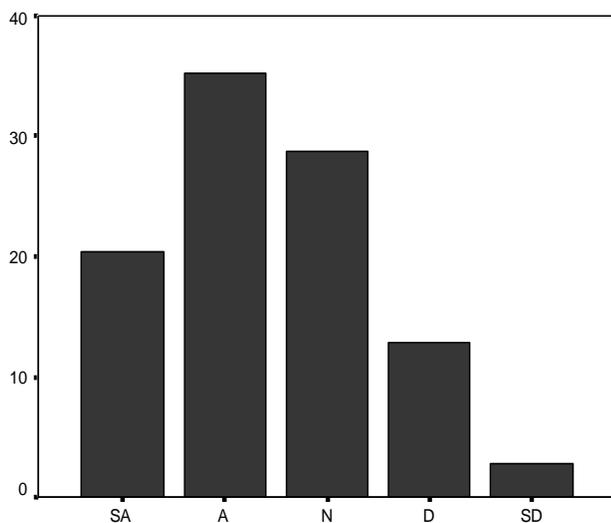
The study examines how the young people attitudes are influenced by their perceptions towards business environment in Oman, possession of personal characteristics start a business in Oman, awareness of opportunities to start a business in Oman, perception of risk and access to social networks in Oman.). The factors which come under attitudes to start a business are:

1. Running own business is rewarding
2. If started a business would learn a lot

Response to statement: Running my own business would be rewarding

Figure.11 shows that 55% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that running business would be rewarding. However, 28.8%of respondents are neutral and 15.6% are disagreed with this statement.

Figure 11: Own business and rewards

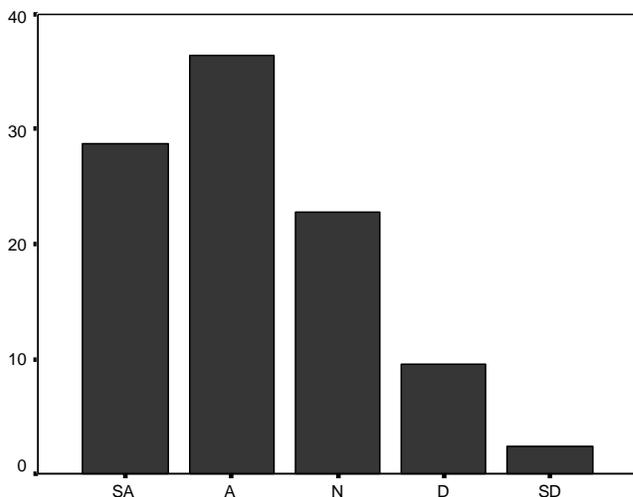


Running my own business would be very rewarding.

Response to statement: If I started a business would learn a lot

Figure.12 shows that more respondents are agreed or strongly agreed (around 65.2%) on this point. On the same time 22.8% are neutral .Only 12% disagreed with this idea.

Figure 12: Started a business would learn a lot



If I started a business would learn a lot.

The respondent’s attitudes towards starting a business different widely because of their perceptions on factors that can affect attitudes. 55% of respondents have an opinion that running a business would be rewarding and only 14% have a different opinion. Others 29% are neutral about their opinion. Moreover, “if started a business would learn a lot “also 65% of respondents shown their opinion that it would be good for them to enhance their

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knowledge. Only 12% of respondents only not have this idea and 23% are not giving their opinion.

According to theory of planned behavior (Ajzon, 1991) attitudes will direct a person to start a business. Entrepreneurial intention can be positive or negative depend on the positive and negative attitudes of respondents (Ajzon, 1991).

4.4 Respondents Intention –To start or not to start a Business in Oman.

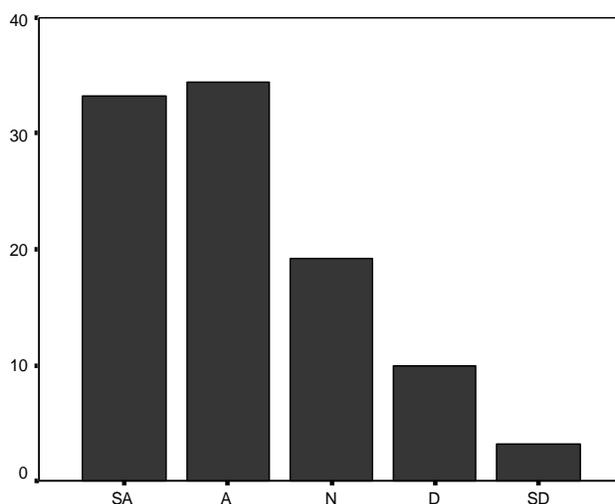
The factor which comes under intention to start a business is:

1. I would like to start a business in Oman

Response to statement: I would like to start a business in Oman

Figure.13 shows that 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed on their intention to start a business. However 19% are neutral on this statement.13% disagreed with this point.

Figure 13: Intended to start a business



I would like to start a business.

5. Summary and Conclusion

It is an observable fact that nowadays many countries are seeking to promote small and medium size enterprises to provide employment opportunities for their growing young populations and to push economic development. A number of research studies have confirmed that enterprises can help countries to achieve their growth objectives. Oman is not an exception. Oman already started to focus on the small business sector and it has established a separate Directorate within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to support the SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) sector. This study has investigated entrepreneurial attitudes among young people in Oman and it highlights many areas that the government of Oman should consider in order to promote more entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions on the part of its youth.

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This study has revealed that internal factors are very positive among youth in Oman. Out of these internal factors more than 60% of youth are more positive about their very innate feeling like confidence and creativity. Yonca and Atsan(2006) found out that entrepreneurial students found to have more internal traits. Therefore, we can conclude that some internal factors are little bit stronger among Oman's youth. However, it is difficult for them to think about taking risk. Yin Miao and Z. Ying (2008) also indicate that entrepreneurial traits positively affect entrepreneurial orientation.

If we see the external factors, we can see that averages of more 50% of people are positive about external factor business environment. Out of this almost 60% not even knowing whether government support available in Oman to start businesses. External factor, access social networks also more than 50% respondents are positive about their knowledge. Therefore, we can conclude that many internal personal characters are strong in Oman's youths still they are barely lacking external factors to start up a business.

The entrepreneurial attitude of young people in Oman seems positive that 35% respondents are agreed or strongly agreed with doing business. 25% are neutral about this point. The main finding of the study is that 68% of respondents intended to start a business and only 13% do not intend to start one. Here too 20% of respondents are neutral.

We did a cross tabulation between 'Gender' and "I would like to start Business (Intention)". A very important finding is that females are more enthusiastic about starting a business than males: 67% of female respondents intended to start business. So female entrepreneurship is one major area where authorities have to concentrate. At the same time a cross tabulation between 'Age' and "I would like to start a business" shows that in the young age (15-20) group, 70% of respondents are interested to start business and 66% of respondents in the age group (21-25) are interested to start a business too. A cross tabulation between 'income' and 'intention to start a business' shows that 59% of respondents in high income brackets, 71% in medium income brackets and 76% from low income brackets are showing an interest to start a business. We came to the conclusion that there is not much connection between income and intention to start a business in Oman. Participants from all income groups are showing the same level of intention. A cross tabulation between 'Faculty' and 'I would like to start business' shows that students studying business related subjects show more interest to start a business. The next groups are engineering students. This is a good indicator that entrepreneurial education related courses can have an impact on intentions to start business.

If we look at the perceptions of respondents in this study, we generally find they have a positive attitude to do business. Furthermore, 82% of respondents are unemployed. This might be because they are university students. But in the near future they have to face the realities of the job market. Accommodating of all these degree/diploma holders in to the job market is a real challenge for Oman. So there is a pressing need for authorities to concentrate more on entrepreneurial orientation and address the issues of entrepreneurial activity in Oman. Another finding of this study is many youths are very neutral about their feeling towards their entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions. They are not ready to talk about what they need or lack to become an entrepreneur. However, we have a feeling that "entrepreneurial culture is popular in Oman and among the youth in Oman.

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Oman needs to integrate its youth entrepreneurial attitudes and behavior into all its entrepreneurial planning activities mainly when it targets development of the small and medium sized (SMEs). Young people's entrepreneurial attitude has generally been ignored in SMEs' development and plans in Oman. We believe a joint effort from educational institutions, entrepreneurial development offices in governmental side and private sector will promote more entrepreneurial attitudes via intentions and Oman will have more enterprises.

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