



**THE CAREER PATHS OF FEMALE EMIRATI
GRADUATES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN DUBAI**

A thesis submitted by

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Abstract

Should the importance of the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting from the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) in shaping Emirati female graduates' careers in the private sector in Dubai be ignored? Although only a minority of female graduates opt to work in the private sector in the United Arab Emirates, there are indications that those who do, feel strongly about the opportunities afforded to them—opportunities that are perceived as being stepping stones to their future careers. In what has become an increasingly competitive labour market, females are no longer willing to sit and wait for a position in the public sector—a sector that has now become saturated and no longer guarantees locals a career. Private sector operators are constantly seeking a better understanding of the terms and conditions that would attract more locals to their sector.

In this mixed-methods study comprising two sets of interviews and an on-line survey conducted over a period of some 2 years, constructs of the SCCT were scrutinised in an endeavour to better judge the validity of the theory in a Middle-Eastern context. In addition, another aim of the study was to better understand female Emirati graduate perceptions of their career paths in the private sector. What factors play a role in how female graduates utilise opportunities and more specifically who or what influences them to make the decisions they do related to everyday work situations and to their career paths generally?

Study 1, the first of two qualitative studies, comprised five in-depth interviews. Questions examined the SCCT's main constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting. Responses were coded and themed accordingly. Contextual impacts were also considered. Responses to goal setting questions influenced the final item set for Study 2.

Study 2 was an on-line quantitative survey comprising 43 questions over five question sets. There were 41 respondents in total. Questions sought to further examine the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting, this time using ready-made questions from various scales. Scales used were the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (Rigotti, Shyns & Mohr, 2008), Utrecht's Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006), the Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale (McWhirter & Metheny, 2009), and the Sources of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations Scale (Lent, Ireland, Penn, Morris & Sappington 2017). Items for the final question set were researcher-designed.

Study 3, as a follow-up to Study 2, sought clarification of the information gathered in Study 2. It also sought further explanation for some unexpected data gathered in the study. Six in-depth interviews were conducted. Trends in responses were used to draw conclusions about specific aspects of a career in the private sector in Dubai.

The findings suggest that although the SCCT appears to be a fit to this Middle-Eastern sample, there are elements of specific latent aspects of the main constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting that are contradictory to the expected results. Recommendations are therefore made for further research to be undertaken on a larger scale with preference being given to a qualitatively driven study through in-depth interviews or focus groups or both.

Certification of Thesis

This thesis is entirely the work of Pamela M. Hawkswell except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Peter McIlveen

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Student and supervisors signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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Abbreviations

HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
OSES	Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale
PM	Personal Mastery
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSEOE	Sources of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UWES	Utrecht's Work Engagement Scale
VL	Vicarious Learning
VOES	Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale
VP	Verbal Persuasion

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Objective of the Study

This research was an investigation into the career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The broad aim was to explore the features of the career paths of female Emirati graduates and determine how these women make sense of their career within certain constraints of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, 2013). Alternative models were generated to test possible competing causal structures against the hypothesised structure of the SCCT. It was assumed for the purpose of this study that career paths could be either progressive—that is moving to a higher level of responsibility and status within an organisation—or regressive in nature—that is moving to a lower level of responsibility and status. It was also anticipated that a combination of both progression and regression in the careers of the graduates would be present.

Context of the Study

The United Arab Emirates is an oil-rich, Islamic country in the Arabian Gulf that has hosted great numbers of foreign workers. This situation has occurred because of the rapid development of the economy over the past 2 decades and because leaders have recognised that for the Emirates to flourish, foreign workers are a necessity, as the local population constitutes less than 10 per cent of the workforce. Expatriates then account for more than 90 per cent of Dubai's population, living in a state of what Ali (2010) refers to as “permanent impermanence” whereby they cannot get permanent residency regardless of how long they have worked and lived there. The structured impermanence of Dubai's three-year visa system, “regulates the lives of expatriates and is the key to understanding much of the social and economic dynamics of Dubai” (Ali, 2010, p. 3). It has also affected the working and living situation of nationals, and “unwittingly created an identity crisis they are trying desperately to come to grips with” (Ali, 2010, p. 164). More recently, new Government systems for hiring and firing locals in private organisations have been implemented. It is now illegal to terminate a national and replace them with a foreign worker “without a legitimate cause” (Government.ae., 2019).

In the private sector, locals are therefore constantly competing with better qualified, more experienced expatriates willing to take less salary to support future career aspirations. Mellahi (as cited in Forstenlechner & Baruch, 2013), adds that these expatriates are also willing to subsume “significantly lower legal protection” in their quest to secure a position in this sector.

Added to this has been the dramatic decrease in the price of crude oil since 2014, a decrease that has seen governments across the region cut state subsidies and reduce overall spending on non-essential projects. This has ultimately resulted in a general slow-down in the private sector. Despite this, the sector is under pressure to increase their national workforce since governments are increasingly unable to absorb their national youth (Gulf Talent, 2016).

Emiratisation. The federal government of the UAE has long since recognised the crucial need for the presence of more locals in the workforce and, as such, has put into place a protective policy known as *Emiratisation*. The Committee for Human Resources Development in the Banking Sector established in 1997, was the first official Emiratisation program and it stipulated that 4 per cent of the workforce in the banking sector should be UAE nationals. This initiative of encouraging nationals into the workforce was further strengthened with the creation of Tanmia (National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority) in 1999. Its primary aim is to coordinate national job seekers with the private sector in addition to reducing unemployment and enhancing the work skills of nationals (Ali, 2010).

Initiatives to support Emiratisation are continuously being developed and implemented with organisations such as the Abu Dhabi Tawteen Council and the Dubai-based Emirates National Development Program being established (Al Zarooni, 2017). The policy continues to stipulate that a percentage of a workforce within both the private and public sectors must comprise Emiratis and that policies related to them should ensure meaningful development of knowledge, skills and abilities to enable future promotion into managerial positions. As pointed out in the Gulf Talent *Employment and salary trends in the Gulf 2016* report, “Creating jobs for nationals continues to be a priority for GCC governments” (p. 2).

Despite this government initiative, Emiratis account for only 1.5 per cent of the private sector with projections that by 2020 when 250,000 locals are set to enter the labour market, they may still fill less than 4 per cent of private sector positions. Reasons given as to why 10 percent of locals working in the private sector resign each year include low wages, a lack of training and development and negative stereotyping to a general lack of trust between employees and employers (Al-Ali, 2008). As noted by Forstenlechner, Madi, Selim and Rutledge (2012), a government position equates to a salary several times higher than a similar position in the private sector together with tenure and an attractive pension. More recently,

the UAE Government is now actively trying to equalise private sector benefits in an endeavour for the sector to better appeal to Emiratis (Rizvi, 2018).

This appears to be in direct contrast to the concept of *wasta* (explained in more detail later) whereby there is always someone around to take care of you whether it be a father, uncle or other family member, thus reducing proactivity and trust in a meritocratic system. As such, they posit the better fit to the private sector for those with a protean career attitude.

Wasta. *Wasta*, stemming from the importance of one's occupation and sector being linked to 'social status', encompasses the concept of "powerful family members intervening on behalf of their relatives to secure employment or better conditions" (Cunningham & Sarayah as cited in Forstenlechner et al., 2012, p. 411). Forstenlechner and Baruch (2013, p. 631) back up this notion by claiming, "favouritism and nepotism can be found in most aspects of the employment relationship, significantly easing all aspects of HRM, from recruitment to promotion, at least for well-connected citizens." Understandably, this is a situation that is not seen as favourable by employers. This, coupled with fear of offending indigenous sensibilities including those related to gender as identified by Nelson (2004) and HRM issues of "a non-national directing a national peer" as identified by Al-Ali (2008, p. 376), are perceived as further stumbling blocks in employers' recruitment of nationals. *Wasta*, according to Cunningham and Sarayah (as cited in Forstenlechner et al., 2012) influences every decision-making process in the Arab Gulf and also affects regional labour markets, with female graduates being no exception.

Women and Work in the UAE

Females in the United Arab Emirates have commanded attention in recent years with regards to them being considered an integral part of the workforce and out numbering males in attaining degrees in higher education. Leaders, for example the late Shaikh Zayed considered the "father" of the United Arab Emirates, have acknowledged how important it is to educate the female populace where it is then expected to be used in a suitably respected and dignified working environment reflective of Islamic principles (Gallant, 2006). Over the last 2 decades women have been encouraged to take their education to tertiary level and beyond. Dubai Women's College, a federal government institution, for example is in its 27th year of operation.

In addition, as pointed out by Forstenlechner and Baruch (2013, p. 638), "in the country context, the investment in citizens' welfare and educational development has led to a perceived entitlement to public sector employment rather than towards exploring career options in the private sector." To a degree, this entitlement has been rescinded with

competitiveness and high performance now dictating whether UAE citizens retain their employment in the public sector (Forstenlechner & Baruch, 2013). They identified this as being part of a change in the psychological contract witnessed in Arab Gulf states.

According to George (2009, p. 3), although definitions may vary as to the nature of a psychological contract, a general consensus seems to be that it is “promissory, implicit, reciprocal, perceptual and based on expectations” and is between employee and employer.

As of 2016, females occupied eight important ministerial positions in the federal government cabinet with the Speaker of the Federal National Council being a woman. This constitutes 27.5% of total cabinet membership. One hundred and fifty-seven women work in the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Women are also serving in several overseas posts ranging from UAE Permanent Representative to the United Nations to Ambassadors and Consul-Generals. (Al Ghawi, 2016).

Not all Middle Eastern countries’ governments are as generous and supportive of females as the United Arab Emirates. The expectation in Middle Eastern societies has always been that females would marry young and take a traditional role in the household, so they have not always got the support they needed to pursue a career after graduation. Marmenout and Lirio (2014, p. 162) described this as, “the ambivalence of social norms toward local women working outside of the home.” Al-Lamky (2007, p. 64) in a study done on women’s empowerment in Oman, concluded, “The appointment of women to senior public positions, as positive as that may be, does not alter the broader social and economic forces that perpetuate women’s secondary status socially and economically.” Forces such as these were kept in mind while conducting this study.

Female graduates. Cultural and social factors impede female graduates’ desire to join the private sector. From a cultural point of view, “many job categories are deemed unacceptable by Emirati society for nationals to undertake . . . this being even more acute for female citizens” (Adam; Baud & Mahgoub as cited in Forstenlechner et al., 2012, p. 411). This has resulted in female graduates gravitating towards the banking sector so much so in recent years that this sector is now at saturation point.

Local female graduates are therefore reluctant to join the private sector, with those who do seeing the move as temporary until they either get married, have a family or start their own business. Some choose to remain at home until a government job becomes available because of the aforementioned discrepancies between packages offered by the public and private sectors (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010). Another part of this reluctance to join the private sector stems from graduates’ lack of knowledge of the sector, resulting in a

fear that is not founded in reality (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012). In addition, the relatively young age of the local work force has meant lack of experience and expertise needed for certain positions has hindered their hiring by private companies (Forstenlechner, 2008).

The majority of female graduates that pursue careers then favour the public sector resulting in decreasing numbers of positions on offer in that sector. Data released by the UAE yearbook in 2013 and based on a 2012 study by the consultancy Booz & Company, cited just 9.3% of the Emirati female labour force as occupying positions in the private sector. In total, Emirati women make up 43.5% of the labour market in the UAE with the government acknowledging women as “a relatively untapped resource” (National Media Council, 2013, p. 170).

Future Trends

Metcalf (2006) cited globalisation as being a catalyst for the increased opportunities for women in Middle Eastern economies. In a study done with female managers she found that women in three countries, Bahrain, Jordan and Oman, were important to the economic development of the countries and that their increasing entry into the labour market underpinned the state-led labour market policies of Bahrainisation, Jordanisation and Omanisation. These developments to promote female talent were global and they along with other issues like religiosity and politicisation of religion, “pose challenges for MNCs and organisations operating within the Middle East in terms of . . . the development of recruitment, employee development and career planning systems” (p. 94).

Given the opportunities presented to females (and males) by the UAE government such as free tertiary education and the Emiratisation policy, what then is the perception of a career path of some of those 9.3% working in the private sector in Dubai? Why do those who join the private sector not necessarily stay: According to Ali (2010), Tanmia found that 27% of nationals hired by banks left within 6 months. The average time of employment of nationals at a bank was 19 months compared with 60 months for the average expatriate.

In future years, there will be fewer places for employment for local graduates in the public sector. Given the fact that half of the national population was below the age of 20 in 2009, (Health Authority of Abu Dhabi as cited in Forstenlechner & Baruch, 2013, p. 632) “there is increased pressure to provide citizens with employment outside the public sector.” As such, it is imperative that future graduates and employers in the private sector have access to more information regarding career paths in general.

Specifically, if more were known about career paths in the private sector, would graduates be more tempted to apply for work in this sector? In addition, if private sector employers were more informed about female Emirati graduate perceptions of the private sector, would they act upon these perceptions in an endeavour to attract and retain more Emirati graduates to the sector?

Research Questions

The research explored private sector employment from the perspective of female Emirati graduates in Dubai. Constructs of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, 2005) namely self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting were used to conceptualise a career in the private sector. A mixed methods approach comprising two sets of interviews and an on-line survey was used to answer the over-riding research question of: *From the perspectives of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, what are the most important factors that constitute a career path?*

Sub-questions that assisted in extracting responses specific to the career-related domain were:

- What role do individual beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting) play in shaping career decisions?
- What aspects of the environment assist and inhibit career-making decisions?
- What other life roles affect career decisions?

Key Findings

Key findings from the study indicate that the three main constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting are integral components of career progression in the private sector, providing they are mostly positive in nature. They are closely linked to each other with self-efficacy the anchor for outcome expectations and goal setting. An employee possessing a healthy self-efficacy is more likely to expect higher-level outcomes with regards to their career and set more challenging goals. Environmental aspects that influence career-making decisions include managerial relationships—positive and negative—colleagues, family and friends and additional duties such as part-time study. Role models to a lesser extent also exert some influence. Work engagement however does not appear to feed into self-efficacy as much as would be expected with latent constructs such as dedication and absorption being perceived by some as default characteristics of any employee joining an organisation.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 presents the literature review relating to the SCCT (Lent, 2005) upon which the research is based, together with studies done on women's careers. Specific studies related to the Middle East region are also included. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and justification for the choice of the mixed-methods approach to the study. Chapter 4 details the first qualitative study. Chapter 5 follows on with the quantitative study, some questions of which emanate from Study 1. The follow-up final qualitative study in Chapter 6 seeks to clarify data gathered and analysed in Study 2 as well as add to the knowledge gained through the previous studies. Chapter 7 summarises the three studies, discusses implications and limitations with recommendations, and suggests future research emanating from this study. Chapter 8 links the findings back to the SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996) and concludes by expressing a hope of what the study has been able to reveal of private sector employees.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of the research which is based in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), espoused by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994), Lent (2005, 2013), Lent and Brown (2013), and Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002). The SCCT explains how career choice is affected by individuals' beliefs that develop and perfect, ultimately resulting in ability linked to success. The SCCT (Lent et al., 2002) placed a great deal of importance on self-efficacy beliefs in relation to the work environment, seeing them as greatly impacting upon both outcome expectations and goal setting in relation to career choice. The constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting are explored in depth, together with contextual supports, and barriers that may aid or hamper efforts to proceed along a particular career path. Interests, choice and agency in relation to these basic constructs are explained in order to understand how people construct their own career development, a development that allows them to change and self-regulate and is representative of the SCCT (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002). Before entering into the SCCT it is necessary to cover its theoretical foundations in Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory investigated and subsequently hypothesised the complex ways people, their behaviour and environments mutually influenced one another. This is referred to by Lent and Brown (1996) as Bandura's triadic reciprocal model of causality and is the cornerstone of the SCCT. An analysis of personal attributes within this model revealed the closely-linked variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting, all of which assist in regulating career behaviour. The SCT theory postulated that self-efficacy and outcome expectations are the drivers of goal-setting, with positive beliefs about capabilities and subsequent outcomes leading to goals similar in nature. Goals are one avenue through which people exercise agency (Lent & Brown, 1996).

Agency. Bandura's (2001, p. 2) definition of agency was, "acts that are done intentionally". In keeping with the nature of this study, it was also pertinent to look at Bandura's (2001, p. 1) concept of human agency in relation to the Social Cognitive Theory, a concept characterised by "a number of core features that operate through phenomenal and functional consciousness that included agency through intention and forethought, self-regulation by self-reactive influence, and self-reflectiveness about one's capabilities, quality of functioning and meaning and purpose of one's life pursuits." Bandura (2001, p. 1) also pointed out that personal agency is subsumed in sociocultural influences where people are

“producers and products of social systems.” He further distinguished between three types of agency: direct personal, proxy (relying on others for desired outcomes) and collective (social interdependent effort). The core features of agency are instrumental in people’s self-development, adaptation and self-renewal during changing times, and these features are all relevant to career paths.

Outcome expectations. According to Bandura (as cited in Bandura, 2001), outcome expectations were constructed by people from observations of conditional relations between environmental events around them, and the outcomes produced by given actions. This was one source of outcome expectations. The ability to bring anticipated outcomes to bear on current activities promoted what Bandura (2001, p. 7) referred to as “foresightful behaviour” enabling people to shape and control the present for a desired future and was the second of three sources of outcome expectations. Unsurprisingly, preferred courses of action adopted by people were generally those more likely to result in positive outcomes; this was identified as the third source of outcome expectations and could be classified as actual incentive value of the outcome or consequence. The more value or importance placed on an outcome expectation, the more likely the behaviour connected to the expectation would be exhibited (Bandura as cited in Fouad & Guillen, 2006). Bandura (2001, p. 6) further maintained that, “outcome expectations are not the characteristics of agentic acts; they are the consequences of them.”

Bandura (as cited in Fouad & Guillen, 2006) listed three forms of outcome expectations that may encourage (incentives) or wouldn’t discourage (disincentives) individuals to behave in a particular way. The forms included physical outcomes (either sensations or discomfort) that followed behaviour, social reactions to behaviour (either positive or negative), and self-evaluations that followed actions (either self-satisfaction or self-criticism). He warned about confusing action performance with associated action outcomes and suggested that outcome expectations be gauged in terms of if-then statements. In this way, the enquiry on the physical, social, and self-evaluative outcomes that followed a successful performance were centred. This can be illustrated by a promotion in the workplace being more about the outcomes of the promotion rather than the actual promotion.

Goal setting. According to Bandura (2001), agents needed to be planners and fore-thinkers, motivators and self-regulators. Agency encompasses the deliberate ability to make and shape choices and appropriate courses of action in order to motivate and regulate their implementation. The monitoring of patterns of behaviour and the cognitive and environmental conditions under which it occurs, is considered an active step. Actions could

in turn give rise to self-reactive influence through performance comparison with personal goals and standards.

Bandura (2001) identified goals as being rooted in a value system and a sense of personal identity, and believed that they invested activities with meaning and purpose and were motivational in nature. Proximal sub-goals were the mobilisers and directors for the distal goals that guided present action and assisted in the progress toward valued futures, a system Bandura (2001, p.8) referred to as, “a combination of distal aspirations with proximal self-guidance.”

Self-efficacy. People’s beliefs in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their own functioning and over environmental events is identified by Bandura (as cited in Bandura, 2001) as self-efficacy, and is a central component of personal agency. People’s belief that they have the power to produce desired results and avoid detrimental ones by their actions, act as core guides and incentives in their everyday lives. Bandura (as cited by Betz & Schifano, 2000) identified four sources through which self-efficacy expectations are learnt. These include performance accomplishments, vicarious learning or modelling, verbal persuasion, and lower levels of emotional arousal, in relation to a behaviour. Performance accomplishments refer to the successful performance of specific behaviours, vicarious learning or modelling to that which happens by observing, imitating and modelling others and verbal persuasion to that which encourages and supports behaviour. Lower levels of emotional arousal may include anxiety in relation to behaviour.

The causal structure of social cognitive theory is heavily reliant on perceived self-efficacy, because efficacy beliefs affect adaptation and change and impact other determinants (Bandura; Maddux & Schwarzer as cited in Bandura, 2001). Efficacy beliefs are closely linked to motivation through goal challenges and outcome expectations, whereby actions related to outcomes are heavily dependent on people’s beliefs as to whether they can produce a particular performance. Perseverance when confronting obstacles as well as length of time and amount of effort given and their perspective of the obstacle all hinge on efficacy beliefs.

Efficacy beliefs also influence the types of activities and environments people choose to enter, inadvertently affecting the direction of personal development. As Bandura (2001, p. 10) explained, “This is because the social influences operating in selected environments continue to promote certain competencies, values, and interests long after the decisional determinant has rendered its inaugurating effect”.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

The SCCT theory as promoted by Lent (2005, 2013), Lent and Brown (2006) and Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002), specifically investigated how career choice was influenced by beliefs that develop and perfect and that ultimately affect success via ability. Self-efficacy (self-beliefs linked to specific performance), outcome expectations (beliefs regarding consequences of particular behaviour), and goal setting relating to the success of the performance, are three features that operate with other features, such as gender, race and ethnicity, environment, and learning experiences to shape the contours of career development (Lent, 2013). Consideration of the intricately linked variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting is central to the SCCT. As such it was of particular interest to this study, as it is believed that occupational paths are forged through these variables. The variables ultimately allowed the components of career development to be seen as a whole. In this instance, the whole was tantamount to the career path. This is illustrated in the diagram of the SCCT model of career choice process. See Figure 2.1

Figure 2.1. Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice and Performance

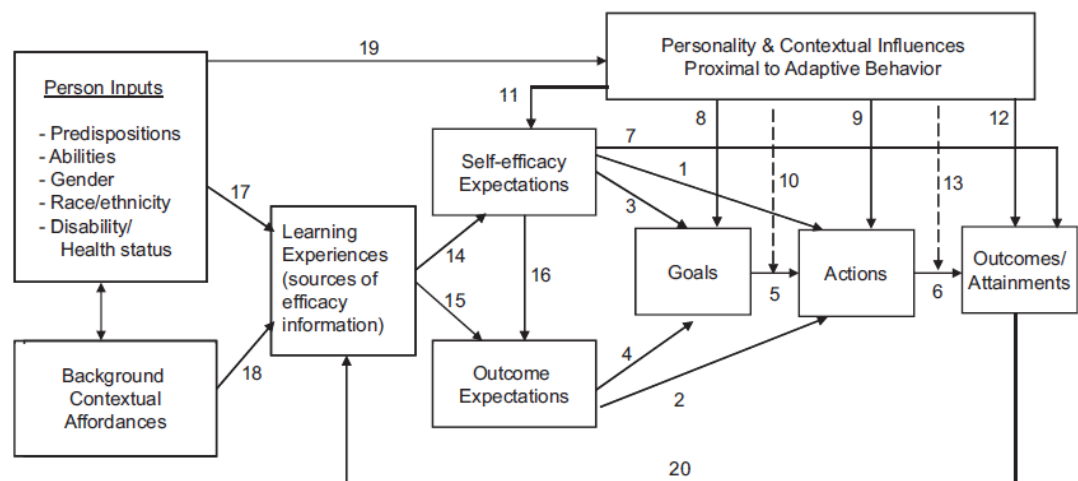


Figure 2.1. Adapted from Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., and Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45(1), 79-122. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027

Along with the career choice process in relation to career development comes personal agency. The SCCT highlights the role of personal goals in choice-making, with self-set goals emanating from the relationship among self-efficacy, outcome expectations,

and interests, thereby rendering personal agency as being involved in one's own career path (Lent & Brown, 1996). Further consideration then needs to be given to those conditions or contextual influences that can either enhance or hinder personal agency. According to Lent and Brown (1996), these influences are generally divided into proximal, those that come into play during the active phases of choice making, and distal, those background interests that precede and help shape interests and self-cognitions.

The SCCT hypothesised that career interests will develop into goals when supportive environmental conditions are perceived to be present and that there are, "potent, direct influences that certain conditions such as discrimination in hiring or cultural practices, exert on choice formation or implementation" (Lent & Brown, 1996, p. 317). In relation to choice, this translates as a compromise if it is perceived that an environment is not supportive, or if entry and prosperity in a career is not considered possible. This will ultimately lead to a career choice being made based on job availability, self-efficacy and outcome expectations, equating to less interesting occupation paths (Lent et al., 2006).

From the SCCT perspective then, people are thought to actively construct their own experiences equating to career development through the variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting, while taking into consideration the effects of others and environmental conditions (Lent & Brown, 1996). These dynamic and specific features of the self-system encompass the ability to change, develop and self-regulate (Lent et al., 2002). What follows is an overview of core SCCT constructs and relevant research.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities of being able to reach a pre-determined performance level and, in relation to the SCCT specifically, involves "dynamic self-beliefs that are linked to particular performance domains and activities such as different academic and work tasks" (Lent & Brown, 1996, p. 312). Lent (2005, p. 104) emphasised that self-efficacy is "not a unitary or global trait, like self-esteem...self-efficacy is conceived as a dynamic set of self-beliefs that are linked to particular performance domains and activities". As such, Bandura (as cited in Lent & Brown, 2006, p. 15) advised that self-efficacy scales should "assess the multi-faceted ways in which efficacy beliefs operate within the selected activity domain". The greatest influence on self-efficacy is thought to be through personal accomplishments, although vicarious learning, social persuasion and physiological states and reactions are also deemed important. Self-efficacy will be raised when experiences are perceived as successful and lowered when the opposite occurs.

Self-efficacy forms. Conceptualisation and measurement of self-efficacy in SCCT research includes the forms of content or task-specific self-efficacy, coping efficacy, process efficacy and self-regulatory efficacy which has features of process and coping efficacy. Content or task-specific self-efficacy refers to "...beliefs in one's ability to perform the specific tasks required to succeed within a given domain under normative conditions", while coping efficacy is represented by "...beliefs in one's ability to negotiate particular domain-specific obstacles" (Lent & Brown, 2006, p. 16). Process efficacy incorporates the perceived ability to manage generic tasks necessary for career preparation, entry, adjustment, and can also represent change related to diverse occupational paths (Lent & Brown, 2006). Career decision-making and management of multiple work/life roles or role conflicts are also considered within process efficacy and are areas that are of particular relevance to this study (Lent & Brown, 2006).

Betz and Hackett (2006, p. 6) warned of the dangers of not fully understanding the concept of self-efficacy, labelling it "a cognitive appraisal of judgement of future performance capabilities, not a trait concept." As such, the behaviour domain of interest must be clearly outlined before assessment can take place. It is therefore incumbent upon the researcher, where no appropriate measure of perceived self-efficacy exists, to define the domain and then devise an assessment closely reflecting that domain. The same logic applies to the variables of outcome expectations and interests, where these should be linked to the behavioural referent. These points will be referred to again in the data collection section.

Choi, Park, Yang, Lee S. K., Lee, Y. and Lee, S. M. (2012) used a meta-analytic approach to better understand Career Decision Self-Efficacy's role (CDSE) within the SCCT framework. The CDSE scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983) used thereby focused more on process-domain self-efficacy because of the researchers' interest in the overall decision-making process people use as opposed to the types of careers people choose. There was found to be no significant direct relationship between CDSE scores and gender, race, and career barriers, and a moderate relationship between CDSE scores and vocational outcome expectation. However, CDSE scores were found to correlate significantly to scores on self-esteem ($rc = .55, p < .001$), vocational identity ($rc = .55, p < .001$), and vocational outcome expectation ($rc = .49, p < .001$), and peer support ($rc = .41, p < .001$). Career indecision variables in the domain of goals ($rc = -.57, p < .001$), showed a large negative effect. The implications were that self-esteem and vocational identity, that together make up self-concept, are absent from the SCCT and, as such, need to be given further attention in future, given the strength of the correlation between self-concept factors and CDSE.

Women's self-efficacy. Betz and Hackett (1981) conducted a study based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory in relation to career decision-making. The study investigated the usefulness of the theory in the understanding of women's career development. The aim was to determine an explanation for the under-representation of women in many professional and managerial occupations. Participants for the study were a group of 134 female and 101 male undergraduates enrolled in introductory psychology courses at the Ohio State University and representing 10 traditional and 10 non-traditional occupational titles. Results revealed that the tradition of the occupation was a more important factor to women than men when self-efficacy expectations of the ability to pursue certain occupations were considered. The self-efficacy expectations of females when compared to male counterparts were considerably lower in relation to non-traditional than for traditional careers. The greater the self-efficacy beliefs with regard to non-traditional occupations, the more likely non-traditional careers would be considered. Further data analysis suggested that interests and self-efficacy were the strongest predictors of the range of career options and that there was a relationship between these variables. Later, Betz (1994) further supported her belief in the importance of self-efficacy in career behaviour by linking efficacy expectations to choice, performance and persistence in career-related domains.

A recent study undertaken by Austin and Nauta (2016) of 620 female college students from a large, public Midwestern university in the United States sought to determine entrepreneurial role-model exposure and self-efficacy as predictors of women's entrepreneurial intentions. In this instance, ESE (entrepreneurial self-efficacy), in keeping with domain-specific features of the SCCT, is considered "beliefs about abilities to carry out tasks associated with starting and running a new business such as marketing, managing employees and finances and taking risks" according to Chen, Green and Crick (as cited in Austin & Nauta, 2016, p. 261). Several studies have suggested that, when compared to men, women tend to have lower entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Kelly et al., as cited in Austin & Nauta, 2016) with exposure for women to entrepreneurial role models being of particular significance according to BarNir, Watsons and Hutchins (as cited in Austin & Nauta, 2016).

Outcome expectations. According to Lent and Brown (1996), outcome expectations come from a variety of direct and vicarious learning experiences, with past endeavours and secondary information contributing to these perceptions. They are "personal beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing particular behaviours" (Lent et al., 2002, p. 262). Several types of beliefs about response outcomes are encompassed in the outcome expectations concept. These include extrinsic reinforcement, self-directed consequences, and

outcomes derived from the process of performing a given activity. Tangible rewards for performance, a feeling of pride for a task well done, and commitment to and focus on a task, are examples of these. The quality of performance feeds directly into self-efficacy.

Outcome expectations have been identified by Bandura (as cited in Lent & Brown, 2006) as either anticipated social, material, or self-evaluative. Anticipated social expectations relate to those perceived as beneficial to the family, while material generally refers to gains which are mostly financial in nature. Self-evaluative outcome expectations are those that equate with self-approval. Outcome expectations also differ in evaluative direction and strength. It is usual to expect either positive, negative, or neutral outcomes when engaging in a particular activity. Following on from this, people usually attempt behaviours they see as likely to result in valued outcomes and avoid those behaviours that may produce the opposite result. It is the former behaviour however that has been the focus of most research on SCCT to date. Most relevant to this research as identified by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994), is the important influence professional outcome expectations have on career interests, choice, performance and attainments.

Women and outcome expectations. A study on gender differences for optimism, self-esteem, expectations and goals in relation to career planning prediction and exploration was done with 467 high school students in Australia by Patton, Bartrum and Creed (2004). A career mediational model based on the SCCT and cognitive-motivational-relational theory (CMR) was tested. The study predicted that self-esteem and optimism would directly predict outcome expectations and that outcome expectations would directly influence career goals—that is those who perceive themselves as being active in the outcomes of life events will set goals. Females were found to differ from males; female optimism led to setting career goals, and then planning for and exploring that career. In addition for females, self-esteem not optimism was found to influence career expectations. In contrast, career expectations of males were influenced by optimism and self-esteem which subsequently predicted career goals, planning and exploration. Authors of the study remind us however that contextual factors such as emphasis placed on career development and support provided by others were not under investigation in this study.

In a study done by Szelenyi, Densen and Kurotsuchi Inkelas (2013) and conducted with women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors and professional outcome expectations in the United States, it was found that so far as academic contextual influences were concerned, peer discussions regarding academic and career issues had the largest influence. The discussions were significant positive predictors of professional

outcome expectations and women's evaluations of the chances of them achieving career success. They were also positive predictors of the women being able to achieve both a professional career while simultaneously maintaining a balanced personal life. With regards to social contextual influences, positive interactions with diverse peers also significantly impacted professional outcome expectations and the ability to once again achieve a professional career and maintain a balanced personal life. In relation to the fourth year participants in the study, self-confidence regarding college success was a significant positive predictor of professional outcome expectations as were the ability to procure a good job and the ability to achieve future career success. Confidence in academic skills was also found to be a significant predictor of professional outcome expectations together with the achievement of career success.

Personal goals. People's efforts are organised, guided, and sustained by setting personal goals, and this can extend long-term without the need for external reinforcement (Lent & Brown, 1996). The SCCT argues that the setting of goals is heavily reliant on self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Positive self-images will, in turn, lead to positive, robust goals, with positive outcomes expected. Environmental events and personal history shape behaviour, but, according to Lent et al., (2002), the setting of goals is not only crucial for exercising personal agency or self-empowerment, but also shapes behaviour, along with other social-cognitive factors with which goals interrelate.

Lent and Brown (2006) identified two primary types of goals with which the SCCT is concerned – choice- content and performance goals. Choice-content goals refer to those related to the activity domain to be pursued, and performance goals are those that link to the level or quality of performance being pursued in a given domain. The former are perceived as motivators and the latter as determinants of the level of success individuals wish to attain (Lent & Brown, 2006).

Women and goals. Women's attempts to balance different life goals such as careers, marriage and having children and the roles that accompany those goals have led to the attrition rate of women in the STEM majors during college years (Ceci, Williams & Burnett, 2009). In addition, women seem to be attracted to those occupations involved with helping others. This can be witnessed in women who become attracted to science fields when the occupation involves helping others.

In endeavouring to explain discrepancies in findings related to gender differences in the value of goal affordances, Ferriman, Lubinski and Benbow (2009) pointed out that a developmental perspective recognises that young adults will value different career outcomes

that depend on milestones such as education, relationships and starting a family. As such, goals change over time with an example being given of a high salaried occupation being an important goal at the beginning of a career, but later, the focus goal may be on a family-friendly occupation to accommodate a change in marital status (Barth, Guaddagno, Rice, Eno & Minney, 2015).

Finally, in a study done by Yeagley, Subich and Tokar (2010), young women's self-efficacy outcome expectations for positions of elite leadership as predictors of interests in and aspirations for such positions were examined. The Social Cognitive Career Theory was used as a framework for the study with a partially mediated SCCT tested on a sample of 156 college women from a Midwestern university to predict elite leadership goals. Fifty majors were represented in the study with participant ages ranging from 18 to 49 years. The factors that influenced women's goals to pursue positions of elite leadership were found to be the SCCT variables of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Interest in elite leadership positions were also related to goals. Interests were shown as related directly to goals whereas outcome expectations and self-efficacy related to them indirectly through interests and interests and outcome expectations together. Outcome expectations also related directly to goals. The authors' suggestion is that encouragement of women's intentions or goals to pursue elite leadership positions should be done while keeping self-efficacy and the role of outcome expectations in mind.

Interests. Career-related interest is one of three segmental interlocking models belonging to the social cognitive framework. Specifically, the SCCT espouses that perceived competency and resultant valued outcomes will lead to enduring interest in a particular activity (Bandura; Lent, Larkin & Brown as cited in Lent & Brown, 1996). The reverse also holds. Carrying this to the next level, it is thought goals are promoted through interest, self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations in relation to further activity exposure – goals that sustain or increase involvement in the activity. Over time, activities are practised enough to become patterns, which, in turn, feed back into self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent & Brown, 1996). Restrictions on activities and exposure to new learning experiences will affect self-efficacy and outcome expectations, either positively or negatively, in relation to new activity spheres.

According to the SCCT, abilities and values also play a crucial role in interest formation and their effects play out via self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Work values are considered part of the SCCT concept of outcome expectations, with people's preferences for work conditions and rewards for particular occupations being evaluated. In relation to the

shaping of vocational interest, choice and performance, as pointed out by Lent and Brown (1996), these social-cognitive variables operate with other personal and contextual qualities, such as gender, race and ethnicity, genetic endowment, and socioeconomic status. In general, self-efficacy and outcome expectations are perceived as filters through which the effects of gender and ethnicity on career interest, choice and performance pass to form these beliefs. Gender and culture have more to do with the opportunity structure within which career goals are placed. Therefore, women, for example, may fail to develop interests in specific career options because of lack of opportunities and experiences, thereby negating positive efficacious feelings and outcome expectations in their abilities to pursue careers of this nature (Lent et al., 2002).

Women and interests. Su, Rounds and Armstrong (2009) examined sex differences in vocational interests using Holland's (1959, 1997) categories of realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional in a study done on 503,188 respondents in the United States. Sex differences in responses on general interest scales and basic interest scales were examined. Justification for the use of these scales was offered in the form of the scales being those most used when developing vocational interest measures and that they provide a good level of understanding with regards to the nature of sex differences. Technical manuals of vocational interest inventories were used as data sources. Specifics were that women would prefer working with people—the social and artistic categories—and that men would prefer working with things—the realistic category of Holland's theory. In conjunction, three supplementary analyses using basic interest scales science, mathematics and engineering-related areas were undertaken to examine sex differences in STEM areas. Results showed an under-representation of women in the STEM fields and substantial differences in vocational interests with the largest difference being between the People-Things dimension. Sex differences were consistent across age and over time and suggest that small numbers of women joining some STEM fields like science and engineering may in fact be a result of their preference to work with people versus working with things.

In contrast, a study done by Barth, Guadagno, Rice, Eno and Minney (2015) from the Alabama STEM Education Research Team in relation to gender and life goals, occupational stereotypes and career interests found that women were more interested in occupations with higher salaries than in those related to helping others. Occupations with family friendly working hours also rated similarly to those with higher salaries. Participants for the study comprised 88 females (first time) and 103 (second time) selected from introductory STEM classes at a public university in the south-eastern United States and were a subset of a larger

college sample. The survey was distributed twice over a period of 7 months using the *Life Goals and Gender Stereotypes* (LGGS) instrument.

Choice. Self-efficacy and outcomes beliefs then are closely linked to career-related interests which lead to career choice goals. These goals are actioned by motivation in the implementation of the goals. Experiences, whether positive or negative, may be the catalysts by which self-efficacy beliefs and subsequent goals are re-formulated. An example of this is when we see a student changing majors from engineering to business because of poor results. In addition to interests, choice may, however, be limited by work availability, whether the capabilities to perform the work are perceived to be present, and whether the results are commensurate with the effort afforded.

Women and choice. As far as gender differences are concerned according to Ceci et al., (2009), marriage and family, helping others and work success regarding advancement (promotion) and salary gains are lifestyle choices that affect career decisions. Women are more likely to set marriage and family and helping others as long-term life goals than are men. Gender differences can come about because of social pressure in relation to career preferences resulting in societally endorsed occupation gender stereotypes. Social role expectations whereby women assume more communal roles that display interpersonal sensitivity and emotional expression are considered the norm. All of these socially-bound beliefs can, by default, limit career choice for women.

In a very recent study on career stereotypes and identities (Dunlap & Bath, 2019) college men and women in STEM were studied in an attempt to examine the gendered nature of implicitly held beliefs related to STEM careers. It was found that many women hold less stereotypical associations with regards to gender and STEM. Subsequently this may encourage these women to pursue careers in STEM fields while at the same time keeping more traditional feminine roles.

Supports and barriers. Contextual supports and barriers are defined by Lent, Brown, Brenner, Chopra, Davis, Tallyrand and Suthakaran (2001, p. 475) as “environmental factors that persons perceive as having the potential, respectively, to aid or hinder their efforts to implement a particular educational or occupational goal”. In a study by Lent et al., (2001), 111 college students from the maths/science choice domain completed measures of math/science-related course self-efficacy, coping efficacy, outcome expectations, interests, goals, and perceived contextual supports and barriers. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations were found to be predictive of interests and choice intentions with bivariate

correlations (r s of .45 and .52, respectively), with support and barrier perceptions having weak direct relations to choice when the direct-effects model was used (CFI = .78, NFI = .76, $X^2(H, N = 108) = 78.43, p < .001$) in comparison to the partially mediated model (CFI value of .95, NFI = .92, and $X^2(11, N = 108) = 26.66, p = .01$). However, barrier perceptions were found to moderate interest-choice relations. Implications of this study were that there was a stronger relationship between barriers and supports via their impact on self-efficacy than that between barriers and supports and choice.

Lent, Brown, Schmidt, Brenner, Lyons and Treistman (2003) studied self-efficacy, coping efficacy, outcome expectations, interests, academic goals, and contextual variables, such as environmental supports and barriers, in a sample of 328 engineering students. Once again, the findings were reflective of previous studies conducted in relation to components of the SCCT, in that contextual supports and barriers were found to be indirectly linked to choice goals and actions through self-efficacy, rather than directly linked. However, cautions regarding generalisations are offered by the researchers in the form of the possible need for the participants to have had a wider range of support and barrier perceptions. Additionally, participants were 80% male and 63% European American. Hence, the interests of choice behaviours of women or students of colour or of greater racial ethnic-minority groups were not accounted for, although the sample was reflective of the larger student cohort within the engineering school.

Yeagley, Subich and Tokar (2010) undertook a study with 156 graduate women at a public university in the United States to ascertain the fit of the SCCT in predicting the women's interests and goals regarding positions of elite leadership. Measures of elite leadership self-efficacy expectations, outcome expectations, interests and goals were taken, with results supporting the SCCT theoretical framework. A direct link was found between interests and goals and self-efficacy and outcome expectations for elite leadership positions, with self-efficacy and outcome expectations each contributing unique variance in predicting elite leadership interests. The importance of outcome expectations as a predictor of career choices had been noted by Fouad and Guillen (2006). Nauta and Epperson (as cited by Yeagley et al., 2010) had also reached similar conclusions, particularly in relation to the attainment of careers considered "outside the social norm for women" (p. 35). In relation to the current study, it is a career in the private sector in general that is considered outside the social norm for women, so these findings will be kept in mind during the analysis of collected data from both Study 1 and Study 2.

Summary. In summary, Lent et al., (2002) argued that self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are pivotal to occupational options that people perceive as viable to pursue. As such, potentially rewarding careers may not be pursued because of stymied efficacy-building experiences, inaccurate self-efficacy beliefs, and occupational outcome expectations. On the other hand, the interplay amongst the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting, leading to successful goal pursuit may, for example, strengthen self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent, 2013). Changes in perceptions of self-efficacy and outcome expectations are thought to result in shifts in interests, with self-efficacy acting as a link between ability and interest. Gender and ethnicity can directly influence the context in which self-efficacy and outcome expectations are acquired and, as such, are linked to career development and, in some cases, can limit career choice.

As acknowledged by Lent and Brown (2006), measurement challenges in relation to the social cognitive career theory arise because of its relationship with domain-specific aspects of human functioning. They caution that, because the SCCT is more concerned with relatively dynamic and situation-specific aspects of people (e.g., self-views, future expectations) and their environments, SCCT researchers, rather than being able to rely on all-purpose methods, “often have to design new measures, depending on the unique features of the behavioural domain of interest and the level of detail at which they wish to study it” (p. 103). Hence, a measurement development phase prior to, or in conjunction with, hypothesis testing is often required in social cognitive research. This is the case for the current study, as the SCCT theory was formulated in respect to Western women but is yet to be applied in the context of Emirati women working in the private sector.

Responses to these studies will assist in building a picture of a career path in the private sector through the eyes of local, female graduates. This path will specifically examine characteristics inclusive of influences and challenges and will take into account proximal environmental influences like barriers and support during choice-making, learning experiences, goal setting and its effect on performance success and individual beliefs, values and decisions that ultimately affect success.

Career Research in the Gulf

Preliminary investigations revealed no specific SCCT research had been conducted on female graduates and their career paths in either the public or private sectors in Dubai or the UAE. However, what was revealed, was aspects of women’s career paths studied in isolation, for example, characteristics of female entrepreneurs (Erogul & McCrohan, 2008; Gallant, 2006; Gallant, Majumdar & Varadarajan, 2010; Goby & Erogul, 2011; Sidani,

2010). In addition, Omair (2008, 2010) investigated women and management and Omeira (2010) conducted a study into schooling and women's employability in the region.

Before proceeding with these studies, it is important to note that, in general, the increasing focus on women's career behaviour has led to a re-conceptualisation of the notion of career. Hall (as cited in Patton, 2013) acknowledged as far back as 1996 that future careers would be nonlinear in nature equating to a number of positions, projects, roles or jobs and would be very much the meaning given by an individual to work and non-work opportunities. Patton (2013) also cautioned that career theory needs to broaden its definitions and conceptualisations of variables in order to fully recognise women's contribution to work and to facilitate full choice for women in the future. She particularly singled out women's place in, and contribution to, public and private spheres as being viewed as less restricted and being "incorporated into the discourse of career theory and practice" (p.17).

A study undertaken that was a closer fit to my intended research was that by Gallant and Pounder (2008) who investigated opportunities and barriers for female national employees in the UAE via a focussed literature study. The reason behind the study was to explore why the level of female employment in the UAE is failing to reach its full potential. Conclusions reached included cultural factors as being largely responsible for the inhibition of the level of employment in Emirati females in the UAE. This was attributed to the traditional culture not keeping pace with the rapidly-expanding economic development for which the country has since become renowned.

Shallal's (2011) study supplied first-hand knowledge on working women by investigating job satisfaction in the UAE. Age, education, and income were cited as the overriding variables. Marriage and conservatism were identified as areas negatively affecting job satisfaction. In this instance, conservatism was identified as a preference to work in an all-female environment. Emirati females numbering 1272 employed in both private and public sectors across the seven emirates of the UAE were targeted through non-probability methods, such as location sampling (target) and chain referral (snowball) sampling. The majority, comprising 64%, were from Abu Dhabi, with Dubai represented by just 3%. Participants' ages ranged from 18 – 55 years, with a mean age of 28 years. Married women accounted for 49% and single women for approximately 45%. Six percent were unidentified. Of the total women, 59% were university graduates. Two of three problems faced by the researchers were those of privacy concerns of the targeted population in relation to the quantitative study and the small number of employed female Emiratis.

Positive relationships were found to exist between age and satisfaction whereby an increase of one year of age correlated with a rise of approximately 1% of satisfaction. In effect older employees were overall more satisfied with their jobs than were younger employees. Positive relationships were also found between higher education and job satisfaction with the study comprising respondents 60% of whom had completed university studies and 25% post-secondary studies and between high income and job satisfaction. The latter comes as little surprise as income generally plays an important role in enhancing job satisfaction. Specifically the study found that Emirati females earning Emirati Dirham 10,000 (\$US 2,723) per month were more satisfied than those earning less than Emirati Dirham 3,000 (\$US 817). Negative relationships were found to exist between being married, conservatism, and working in an all-female work environment as regards job satisfaction.

Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) studied private-sector fear and prejudice and, in so doing, specifically addressed the private sector in the UAE. Sixty interviews were conducted with mixed-gender participants ranging from final year college students to employed and unemployed graduates. The age range of the participants was 19–23 years, and the main purpose was to explore the career choice behaviour through the variables of attitudes, beliefs, and thought processes. Career expectations and perceptions of these young citizens were considered together with the relationships to socio-cultural and institutional environments in an attempt to understand the reasons behind the definitive preference for public sector employment by Emiratis.

A conclusion reached by Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) was that there appears to be an abnormal fear of the private sector, a fear that stems from graduates' lack of knowledge of the sector and one that is not founded in reality. There was an overwhelming preference, therefore, for Emiratis to work in the public sector, because of job security, salary levels and opportunities for advancement. To a lesser extent, holidays and working hours were also seen as favourable in this sector. Only 15% of respondents favoured the private sector. Of these, 38% conceded that good career opportunities consistent with their specialisation and opportunities for advancement were the attractive features of this sector. Twenty-seven percent preferred to wait for a position to come up in the public sector rather than veer towards the private sector. Another 23% indicated that they would take a private-sector job temporarily until a position in the public sector came through. Also present was the sense of entitlement felt by many respondents. This relates to living in a relatively "rich" country where the government can afford to pay locals well.

The structure of the UAE labour market favours the public sector in terms of salaries and conditions. These are linked to the local socio-cultural and institutional environment, rather than to the individual characteristics or personal agency of those seeking employment. Government agencies therefore have the potential to change perceptions, and by default, resistance to the private sector by studying the structure of the labour market, which is the root of the problem.

In addition, Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) in their study proposed that self-efficacy may be reduced by pressure to work in the private sector because of the expatriates generally being thought of as having a higher work ethic than Emiratis working in the public sector. This is based on the perspective of personal agency as identified by Bandura (as cited in Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012) and ultimately has a negative effect on Emirati beliefs in their ability to compete for private sector jobs. According to Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) these beliefs extended to the conclusion reached by young Emiratis that they are not in sufficient control of their environment in relation to the private sector.

A major limitation to Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner's (2012) study as acknowledged by themselves is that the study presented one perspective: that of young, national job-seekers. This failed to take into account, amongst other factors, expatriates and more importantly for my study, those who have actually experienced the private sector. Recommendations of training and orientation to boost confidence in those intending to apply to the private sector as well as interventions by State bodies to ensure a more level playing field so far as work conditions are concerned were discussed.

Women's careers. Patton (2013) presented a brief history of theoretical approaches that have been used to define women's behaviour in relation to their careers. Highlighted was the importance of broadening definitions of what constitutes a woman's place and their subsequent contribution to the private and public sectors. Patton also suggested incorporating *adaptability* (Savickas, 1997) to change to account for a more accurate discourse of career theory and practice. In this instance, *adaptability* as defined by Savickas (1997) is where the "client" becomes aware of what it takes to develop themselves by looking around at possible opportunities and subsequently choosing those appropriate for advancement. The concept of adaptability as being part of a successful career path is in unison with Savickas' (2012) Career Construction Theory (CCT).

Female careers in the gulf. Other researchers who have investigated female workers in the UAE have identified motivational factors and societal influences emanating from Islam as important components that influence careers. Studies focussing on the entrepreneurial career have been carried out by Erogul and McCrohan (2008), Gallant et al., (2010), Sidani (2010), and Goby and Erogul (2011).

The study by Erogul and McCrohan (2008) was an exploratory study that investigated female entrepreneurs in the UAE. Motivational factors driving entrepreneurial tendencies were explored in the context of the UAE, which was found to be comparative to Singapore, Finland and Norway in terms of its Gross Domestic Product per capita, but seemingly lagging behind in female entrepreneurial activity. Support for these women from personal social networks, that is anyone having direct relations with the entrepreneurs, was also examined. The desire for independence, leading to control over working and personal lives, was found to be the primary motivating factor driving Emirati women to start their own business. High on the list of motivational factors was also the desire to contribute to their society. Support from male family members resulted in women being less inhibited about starting their own business.

Gallant, Majumdar and Varadarajan (2010) found that female undergraduates were happy to pursue an entrepreneurial career on the condition they were given an entrepreneurial program prior to their graduation. The role of universities in fostering and preparing such graduates for future entrepreneurship roles was considered important. It is anticipated that tertiary institutions will feature in my study insofar as characteristics and influences of career paths are concerned.

Social and cultural obstacles were found by Sidani (2010) to impede female participation and involvement in social, political and commercial activities, hence diminishing entrepreneurial hopes by default. The lack of administrative and financial training, together with personal reasons, were factors that impeded entrepreneurial endeavours. Sidani's (2010) conclusion was that young females need support in all stages of the entrepreneurial process, a support that is not always evident.

Goby and Erogul (2011) reached the conclusion that, although Government agencies have encouraged female involvement in business and public ventures, traditional female roles are still predominant. Of significant importance to female entrepreneurs was networking with family and with single gender bases. Support of various business women's councils for courses and training and the need for independency were once again found to be motivational factors with business education for women seen as an encourager of entrepreneurial drive.

Given the results from Goby and Erogul (2011), it is assumed that networking and support may feature as motivational factors behind career paths in my research.

A study involving in-depth personal interviews with eight Emirati women working at a public sector tertiary institution, was undertaken by Williams, Wallis and Williams (2013). The study revealed that, even though fathers explicitly encouraged their daughters to pursue tertiary education and careers, there was an implicit understanding that daughters would observe societal norms by seeking employment in the public sector. It is therefore hypothesised in relation to this study that females working in the private sector would not have the same pressure applied by fathers.

A literature review, including sources, such as the International Labour Organisation (2006, 2008) to explore schooling and women's employability in the Arab world was the basis of Omeira's research paper published in 2010. The lack of work experience, as well as marriage, were highlighted as major obstacles to employment in the private sector. A lack of training related to work experience was also mentioned. It is highly likely that these perceived obstacles will also be present in data collected from my study as public sector working students currently upgrading their qualifications, frequently make reference to these barriers.

A study by Badri, Mohaidat, Ferrandino and El Mourad (2013) tested the validity of the Lent and Brown (2006) model of career satisfaction with 5022 teachers in Abu Dhabi in the UAE and found a strong fit of the data to the model. Career satisfaction accounted for 82% of the variance in work satisfaction. The model was based on the premise that satisfaction in jobs was more likely when five conditions are met. Two of these conditions were a feeling of competence in performing work tasks and attaining work goals and were seen as measures of self-efficacy. In the Badri et al., study, self-efficacy was indirectly related to work satisfaction through work conditions and goal progress, while goal support was also found to be indirectly related to work satisfaction via work conditions and self-efficacy as reflected in goal progress. Although this particular model differs to the one that will be used for my study, that is the SCCT model of career choice process and decision making, it is necessary to acknowledge that career satisfaction will influence career choices of participants.

Marmenout and Lirio (2014) looked specifically at why educational achievement was not being transferred to the workplace by local Emirati women. An in-depth study of 18 female Emirati professionals, half of whom worked in the banking sector, was undertaken, with findings revealing a culturally and ethnically-gendered context unique to the UAE. The

study, through use of a focus group approach, sought to gain a better insight into how careers are navigated, including the challenges faced. Challenges, as identified for the purpose of the study by Marmenout and Lirio (2014) as “problems emerging while pursuing one’s career”, included societal norms, family formation, primary commitment to family, and the maintenance of modesty (p. 151).

Societal norms were found to limit some participants’ careers. It was perceived that young women needed a lot of strength to influence their family to allow them to work (Gallant, 2006), as society is still ambivalent about the working conditions of women, the latter being confirmed in Marmenout and Lirio’s (2014) study. Internships tended to be accepted as experiments by many Emirati families, with the notion of these turning into full-time, continuous employment being questioned. Men often take on the protector role, not wanting sisters or wives exposed to the reality of the working world. In a wider, more generalised paper, Pajares (as cited in Phillips and Zimmerman, 1990) acknowledged that home, cultural, educational and mass media influences could lead to different gender expectations, with parents often underestimating daughters’ academic competences, thereby resulting in lower expectations by their daughters. To this end, it is not surprising in a society where females are purportedly more protected than those in western societies, that this should be the case.

Marmenout and Lirio (2014) also found that marriage and childbearing surfaced as two issues facing those wishing to pursue an active career. Today’s social media and exposure to Western media and expatriates has led to a much wider choice of possible marriage arrangements not witnessed in the past in Emirati society. Marmenout and Lirio’s (2014) study also revealed that many women now discuss their situations with both families and potential spouses in relation to their career status before the wedding in the hopes of being able to continue work afterwards. Extended families and children are highly valued in middle-eastern society, and within the UAE, added pressure is placed on females culturally and demographically in that having a large number of children is valued by both society and government due to dwindling numbers of Emiratis over the past decades (Marmenout & Lirio, 2014).

Commitment to children’s welfare was considered a priority for all participants, whereby careers were or would be put on hold should there ever come a time when that welfare was under threat (Marmenout & Lirio, 2014). Over-stepping husbands in terms of earnings and promotions and educational levels was seen as a challenge, with there being the belief of a need to balance self-realisation, career advancement and maintaining the

equilibrium at home. This was especially evident for those women working in the private sector with husbands in the public sector, since public sector working hours are much shorter (Marmenout & Lirio, 2014).

In regards to my study, challenges that will be faced by participants in my study will be related to the workplace directly and to society in general rather than to families. Families are expected to play more of a supportive role—a role whose primary aim may be to perhaps encourage participants to take up employment in the private sector in the first instance.

Research Questions

This research project explored the relatively “unknown” world of private sector employment for female graduates in Dubai with the over-riding research question being: *From the perspectives of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, what are the most important factors that constitute a career path?* As such, the main research questions under consideration are listed below. The phenomenon of interest is a career path in the private sector with sub-questions of:

- What role do individual beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting) play in shaping career decisions?
- What aspects of the environment assist and inhibit career-making decisions?
- What other life roles affect career decisions?

The Methodology chapter that follows details the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the research. Researcher roles and relationships together with obligatory standards of quality for both qualitative and quantitative studies are detailed. Ethical practices and their implications complete the chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Presented in this chapter are the philosophical and methodological foundations of the research. Examined and discussed are the research techniques that follow both qualitative and quantitative paradigms in the light of the mixed methods approach applied to this research. Explanations offer insight into the influence of ontology and epistemology on the methodology employed, all the while adding justification for the choices made in carrying out the study in the manner selected.

The belief that knowledge is a combination of multiple realities and multiple perspectives but can also be represented by a single reality that discounts individual perceptions underpins procedures and practices. Definitions of researcher roles and relationships serve to emphasise the importance of reflexivity particularly in relation to the qualitative studies undertaken. Finally, detailed discussions of standards of quality in research highlight consideration of the mixed methods approach. Another detailed section on ethical behaviour when undertaking all research finishes off the chapter.

Research Paradigm

As pointed out by LeCompte and Preissle (as cited in Kawulich, 2009, p. 39), “One’s philosophical and theoretical perspectives, tacit or overt, drive one’s approach to research.” Specifically, educational research drawing on sociology, psychology and philosophy assumes a more informed understanding of the educational process leading to improved educational practice (Wiersma, 2000). This also holds for research conducted in environments other than those educationally oriented. As such, my research will relate to a workplace environment, with the view to examining perceptions of career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, United Arab Emirates through the lens of the SCCT. In addition, the assumption is that a guided reflection and subsequent more-informed understanding of participant career paths through interviews and an online survey, will result in a more comprehensive array of recommendations for both participants and those stakeholders concerned with enriching the career paths of female Emirati employees.

In their overview of principles of research, Somekh, Burman, Delamont, Meyer, Payne, and Thorpe (2005) pointed out that different disciplines tend to favour various approaches to research. They give an example of management and business research and state that quantitative methods of analysis and model building are usually dominant in the curricula of business schools in the United States and France. However, globalisation may have produced a situation whereby approaches to research may now be culturally bound. Because a relatively small amount of research has been undertaken in the Middle East to this point in

time, it is unlikely that this applies to here thereby granting me a degree of freedom to directly fit the methodology to the questions being posed and to my philosophical and theoretical standpoints.

Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 333) define a research paradigm as “a conceptual framework within which scientific and other theories are constructed, and within which scientific practices take place.” More specifically, Kuhn (1962) refers to it as the “beliefs, assumptions, values and practices shared by a research community” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). The application of research techniques that follow a qualitative paradigm will differ substantially from those following a quantitative paradigm. Some broad differences between qualitative and quantitative paradigms, as identified by Braun and Clarke (2013) and which are relevant to my research, include, but are not limited to, words used as data versus numbers, recognition of data as gathered in a context versus identifying relationships between variables for explanation, limited, detailed accounts from each participant as against broad, shallow data from many participants and acknowledgement of the value of personal involvement and partiality against detachment and objectivity.

Even so, O’Dwyer and Bernauer, (2014) would argue that distinctions made between qualitative and quantitative can be somewhat artificial due to the blurred boundaries between these two approaches. In fact they go further by promoting appreciation of mixed methods and highlighting the unique roles that both quantitative and qualitative traditions play when producing knowledge and refer to them as complementary in nature. An example from this research is the qualitative nature of Studies 1 and 3, with participants focusing on perceptions and experiences of their career paths, and the quantitative nature of Study 2, with cognitive outcomes like self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting being measured in relation to each other and to the SCCT in general.

In the end, the aim of the research was to employ a systematic approach to uncover unknown material that is perceptions of career paths in the private sector in Dubai, through multiple examinations in multiple ways.

Ontology

Ontology and epistemology influence methodology in research and refer respectively to “theories about the nature of reality or being and about the nature of knowledge” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 26). Ontology is defined as beliefs about the nature of being and epistemology as beliefs underpinning knowledge assertions (O’Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The ontology continuum, according to Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 26), “ranges from relativism where reality is dependent on human interpretation and knowledge, through critical

realism with a pre-social reality that is only ever partially known, to realism wherein a pre-social reality exists that is accessible through research and totally independent of human ways of knowing about it.” Realism underpins most quantitative research whereas a relativist ontology underpins some qualitative approaches but rarely informs quantitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Accordingly, a critical realist position supports a number of different qualitative approaches, including some versions of thematic analysis, an analysis type that was used in Study 1 and Study 3 of my research. That is to say, participant responses to interview questions were coded into broad themes thereby representing from my viewpoint, a translation of participant reality of a career path. Study 2 on the other hand, was more reflective of realism due to the somewhat clinical, structured way of data collection.

In general, the mixed-methods approach suggests that my beliefs span both a relativist and realist spectrum and these are reflected in the subsequent studies. Studies 1 and 3 reflect the belief that there exist multiple versions of reality. All of these are shaped by the context which in turn are dependent on experiences. Reality then is in the eye of the participant with the researcher further analysing through her own beliefs and interpretation of reality and as such can be transferred to similar contexts but not necessarily generalised to the rest of the population. Study 2, because of its nature, that is using objective measurements, suggests that the more controlled nature of the study will result in truths being able to be generalised to other situations. More specifically, whatever is found in relation to the fit of the SCCT to this region, could then be assumed to apply to other Middle Eastern countries harbouring similar federal private sector policies and regulations.

Epistemology

Epistemology signifies beliefs underlying knowledge claims and are dictated by ontological beliefs. As pointed out by Killam (2015), it is the relationship the researcher has with the research and is established through asking questions of ourselves like how do we get knowledge and how do we discover new things. The assumption with qualitative research is that learning is about multiple realities and multiple perspectives. As such the implication is that the researcher and the participant co-construct knowledge. This knowledge is perceived as dynamic in nature, as compared to a static objective truth, with results comprising efforts to obtain a wider, richer and more comprehensive understanding of reality. Reality is gleaned via empathetic listening, observation and discussion (O’Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

The aspects mentioned above are reflected in the five interviews conducted in Study 1 whereby responses to questions inevitably resulted in the emergence of core themes together with additional information outside the parameters of these themes. “Rich” data were

supplied by participants via reflections on past experiences. The bulk of this data was not factual but opinion and personal philosophy occasionally peppered an otherwise descriptive dialogue. Member checking of transcriptions also resulted in additional reflection by participants all of which served to add credence and depth to the original responses.

Study 3 comprising six interviews can also be said to have teased out additional information that emanated from the quantitatively-styled Study 2. More clarification and justification were needed to paint a clearer picture of what a career looked like in the private sector. Participants were asked to judge the success of their career to date as well as to identify significant influencers on their career. The final task was to project a future career path. Responses from participants included facts usually backed up by examples comprising both personal and others' opinions. As such, both researcher through specific questions and subsequent analysis, and participants through their responses, co-constructed the knowledge for this final study.

Conversely, the quantitative tradition is based on an underlying assumption of a single reality that is independent of the perceptions of individuals. Lichtman (as cited in O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) however, points out that neither quantitative nor qualitative researchers ever really adhere to a pure form of practice in relation to their respective beliefs, preferring instead to listen and learn from others in their realisation that each of us has only a piece of the truth. Mixed-methods designs legitimately afford the researcher with greater scope upon which to reflect more deeply on both the qualitative and quantitative data that have been collected. Such designs offer thick, rich narratives from which to extract common themes, which can subsequently be used to drive certain questions for a quantitative method. Results from quantitative studies can sometimes then be generalised to the wider population of interest.

As identified by Henwood and Pidgeon (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013), similar in nature to critical realism, and positioned between positivism and constructionism, is contextualism. Like constructionism, contextualism does not accept a single reality and views knowledge as situated in contexts and reflective of the researcher's positions. Tebes (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013) also argued that knowledge will be true or valid in certain contexts although there is no single method that can get to *the truth*. This description resonates with me and goes back to the very essence of the aim of the study, which is to validate the SCCT within the context of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai as part of understanding what a career path looks like for these graduates in the present day.

For this study, the theoretical framework is Lent's (2005) SCCT. It was assumed that the variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting were relevant measures upon which to build an understanding of Emirati women's career paths. The fact that these constructs had not been tested in a Middle Eastern context necessitated initial interview responses being used for additional questions to pre-existing, standardised tests linked to the SCCT.

The methodology or framework within which the research was conducted was both qualitative and quantitative, leading to what is commonly referred to as mixed-methods. O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014, p. 26) categorically state they see "no essential conflict that precludes the practical and pragmatic application of both qualitative and quantitative research methods to problems to obtain an enriched appreciation and understanding of phenomena," insisting that "complementary contributions can be made in the same study, referred to as mixed methods." Gorard, Taylor and Moore (as cited in Wagner & Okeke, 2009, p. 64) also see mixed-methods research as "compatible in a paradigm referred to as pragmatism."

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies consist of theories and practices that guide the research – in other words guidelines that direct how to conduct the research and what types of results to expect and subsequently make claims against. In summary, methodology assists the researcher in making decisions including participant selection, data collection methods and analysis and the researcher and their role amongst other considerations (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Examples of some broad differences that are acknowledged between qualitative and quantitative methodologies include the generation of quite narrow but dense (descriptive) data from each participant versus shallow but broad data with many more participants, the seeking of understanding and interpretation of more local meanings versus identification of relationships between variables, and the values placed on personal involvement and subjectivity versus those placed on detachment and objectivity (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These selected, contrasting features form the basis of my justification for choosing the mixed-methods approach, as I believe when put together, their very dichotomy reflects a more comprehensive picture of a career path in the private sector than if either of the two methodologies had been used in isolation.

In my research, the qualitative methodology component was subsumed within a primarily quantitative study where initially, five graduates were interviewed to gather insights into how they perceived their careers in the private sector. Results of the data analysis were then used to inform and drive further questions in the quantitative online survey related to the

SCCT within this Middle Eastern context. A second qualitative study was then conducted— Study 3—to better understand both expected and unexpected results of Study 2. Results of all studies are presented sequentially in the pages that follow. My research can therefore be described as an exploratory, mixed method approach as although the data were collected at different times, it worked together to answer the same research question.

The Researcher Role and Relationships

As is to be expected, the researcher plays multiple roles during a research experience and these roles can change over time. As identified by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008), roles can range from Outsider (detached observer to observer as participant) to Insider (participant as observer to complete participant). See the Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Role of the Researcher

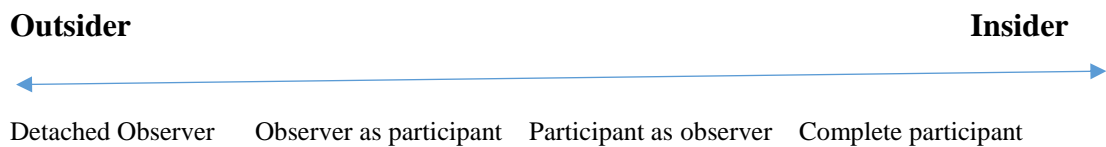


Figure 3-1. Role of the Researcher. Adapted from “Research Methods in Education (6th ed.),” by L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison, 2006, London: Routledge.

Although these roles in this instance relate to being physically “outside” and “inside” an institution, in this instance I have expanded the meaning to relate to the actual topic of study, that is, career development. The researcher’s role in this case tended to be mostly as a “detached observer” although it could be argued that the fact I worked with the five participants in Study 1 and six participants in Study 3 in either a lecturer or colleague capacity made me more of an “attached observer” both physically and mentally. Study 2, because of its nature (i.e., an on-line survey), dictated that I was physically detached from the work environments upon which participants based their experiences and subsequent responses. However, any questions fielded through email or telephone from participants were dealt with accordingly, therefore suggesting my role in this capacity was more “insider”. Study 3 like Study 1, saw me resuming the “detached/attached observer” roles to a certain degree since participants were known to me either in a teaching capacity or as colleagues within the college in which I worked.

Cohen et al., (2008) highlight the significance of role negotiation, balance and trust stressing that an important part of role selection has to do with access to as wide a range of people as possible as well as preservation of neutrality and confidentiality. Although they identify role conflict, strain and ambiguity as elements of qualitative research, I did not encounter these in any way. I would argue the absence of these characteristics was, on the contrary, due to participants having already had a rapport with me for a minimum of 1 year previous to the interviews and in the three graduate cases, having worked with me on the course Career Development and Planning. I also emphasised to participants that all information provided in interviews would be coded for confidentiality purposes along with their identification and those companies to which they refer. This will be discussed more in the Ethics section that follows.

It is wise at this point to also consider Creswell's (2009) belief that the focus of all qualitative research should be on understanding the phenomenon being explored, not solely on the reader, researcher or the participants being studied. In my case, this relates specifically to an understanding of career paths of the female Emirati graduates. This is a point well worth remembering because as interviews were a tool of the qualitative method of Study 1 and Study 3, it would have been easy to get caught up with participants, especially as I had worked with them as their teacher in the past. I made a conscious effort during the transcription and subsequent analysis of the data to remain objective when teasing out codes and themes for a wider picture of participant realities.

As referred to in the opening lines of this chapter, naturalistic research all but guarantees that researcher emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and values will enter into the research process sometimes to the detriment of objective analysis of participant perspectives and meanings. This is backed up by Hitchcock and Hughes (as cited in Cohen et al., 2008). As such, reflexivity, defined by O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014, p. 11) as "a conscious awareness of cognitive and emotional filters comprising experiences, worldviews and biases that may influence interpretation of participants' perceptions" needs to be employed, especially in relation to qualitative research. Gallais (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013) further divides reflexivity into "insider" and "outsider" positions, positions that are based on shared group identity with participants.

Positionality, in a broad sense, as described by Savin-Baden and Major (2013), refers to the location of the researcher in terms of the subject, participants and the research context and process within a given study. In my case, I consider myself to be in both positions – insider in that I am a female researching other females and that I attend the same institution,

but outsider because my ethnicity differs from that of participants. I have lived in predominantly Western style societies for the first half my career and Islamic societies for the latter half, but the initial exposure to Western style societies is what shaped my beliefs. This feature of ethnicity can have an effect on positionality such as whether one position over the other provides advantages to the researcher. In this instance, I believe my exposure to both societies has given me an advantage of being able to analyse collected data in more depth because of the knowledge and subsequent insights I have built up of the Islamic society over the past 20 years. While some may see this as creating a certain bias, I would argue that being immersed in a culture for some 20 years facilitates a more accurate understanding of how these female Emirati graduates make sense of their careers.

Returning to reflexivity once again, Braun and Clarke (2013) see it as essential to all qualitative research labelling it as part of quality control and advise researchers to keep a reflexive research journal to record thoughts, feelings and reflections as you work through the research process. See Appendix A for examples of such reflections recorded after Study 1 interviews. Wilkinson (1988) in Braun and Clarke (2013) cites two forms of reflexivity, functional and personal. The former relates to the effects of the choices of research tools and processes on the research and the latter refers to an acknowledgement of who we are as researchers, both physically and mentally. In my research, the choice of the mixed method approach was arrived at through consultation with my Supervisor. We first looked at the topic and questions emanating from this before considering my strengths and preference for approaches. I had previously completed a master's degree using the qualitative approach, so my experience and preference was for this approach. However, my Supervisor was of a different mind-set pointing out that to properly test the SCCT in a Middle-Eastern context and then be able to generalise to the region, a quantitative approach in conjunction with the qualitative approach was necessary. As such, this meant that I needed to study the quantitative approach in depth to be able to not only understand it but to also be able to recognise and apply the correct statistical tests offered by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to accurately analyse collected data from Study 2.

Personal reflexivity, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 37) is about "bringing the researcher into the research, making us visible as part of the research process." It not only acknowledges who we are as researchers, but includes how we can both physically and assumption-wise mould the knowledge produced. From conception of the research until the last piece of evidence was collected, analysed, documented, submitted and defended, I remained alert and open to more acceptable ways of doing the research and to alternative

interpretations of the results. Accepting these challenges however comes with the, at times, overwhelming research territory.

Standards of Quality in Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Multiple standards of quality, known as trustworthiness, vigour, credibility, and validity, are embraced by qualitative research from a variety of disciplines, paradigms and epistemologies (Morrow, 2005). In Morrow's view, there are certain indispensable qualities, such as sufficiency of and immersion in the data, subjectivity and reflexivity, adequacy of data, and issues related to interpretation and presentation that pertain to all research regardless of the paradigm under which it falls. As such, she warns that researchers need to be careful to choose a paradigm most appropriate to the research as well as grounding the research in a significant theory base leading to the questions that guide the research.

Morrow (2005) also attempts to equate various terminologies used in both qualitative and quantitative research – *credibility* in qualitative equates to *internal validity* in quantitative, *transferability* to *generalizability*, *dependability* to *reliability* and *confirmability* to *objectivity*. These equivalencies seem to be particularly relevant to a mixed-method approach, but she cautions that they may not accomplish the exact same goals in both kinds of research, because of the differing natures of the research. She exemplifies this through the use of the terms *idiographic* and *emic* being applied to qualitative research and nomothetic and *etic* representing quantitative research. The former refers to focusing on few individuals and categorising meaning from the data, the latter to standardised methods of gathering data from large samples and subsequently categorising it from existing theory and operationalising it. This is in essence, an overview of my research whereby Study 1 focused on five Emirati, female participants and how they make sense of a career path in the private sector – data were coded and categorised to extract themes. Study 2 was an online survey completed by 41 participants and attempted to determine the fit of the SCCT model to female careers in the private and semi-private sectors in Dubai. Study 3 returned to focus on six Emirati female participants in order to further clarify responses to Study 2.

Credibility versus internal validity. According to the qualitative tradition, credibility is a critical element of *trustworthiness*. Geertz (as cited in Morrow, 2005) cited several ways in which credibility can be achieved, such as prolonged engagement with participants, including observation, researcher reflexivity, and participant checks, and validation or co-analysis. Thick descriptions are given particular emphasis, whereby “the thickness of the descriptions relates to the multiple layers of culture and context in which the experiences are embedded” (p. 252). There must also be a sufficient amount of data assessed.

Researcher reflexivity was continually practised in my research and participant checks for Study 1 were done verbally directly after the interview and then followed up with the transcript being sent out to participants within a week of the interview. On one occasion a participant replied clarifying a point she had made and asking that additional information be added to the original thought and be taken into consideration.

In Study 1, although there were only five participants, the main aim was to explore in greater depth the environment in which elements of the SCCT could operate with the need to perhaps adjust and tailor-make some questions for the quantitative study. Study 1 was to tease out those elements or experiences that female Emirati graduates saw as important to them and their careers to this point in time – elements and experiences that were irrefutably embedded in the societal culture. Hence, thick descriptions were produced during the interviews with detailed analysis offering further insights and links back to the SCCT, which has mostly been tested in Western countries up to now, from within the environment of this Middle Eastern city. This is in keeping with O'Dwyer and Bernauer's (2014) reference to validity in qualitative research whereby, in their opinion, it is an advantage to conduct related research in different settings, thereby extending knowledge and understanding of the phenomena. Study 3 aimed to better clarify aspects revealed in the analysis of Study 2.

Goodman (as cited in Braun & Clark, 2013) broadly sees validity as research exhibiting what it claims to exhibit. In a more formal way, O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014, p. 136) define internal validity of a study as being "a function of the degree to which extraneous variables are controlled and possible alternative explanations for the results observed are minimized." As such it is more an evaluation of the degree of control or minimisation over common threats, a control or minimisation that falls back on the researcher through choice of appropriate design, implementation procedures, data collection instruments and analysis methods. Gasson (2004) takes a more simplistic approach to internal consistency stating its focus should be to ensure a rigorous research process has been undertaken and is subsequently communicated to others. Again, responsibility falls back onto the researcher. I was able to achieve this in part by keeping notes before, during, and after the interviews in Study 1 and Study 3, and by documenting the process undertaken in a step-by-step manner in order to recruit and follow-up on potential participants for Study 2 albeit sometimes in an indirect way through a third party. For example, I could follow-up on those participants contacted personally, but those who were listed in the database of the college and university alumni needed to be contacted by the personnel responsible for sending out the initial email complete with the survey link. These personnel included an Officer of Industry Liaison

Outreach and Engagement in the first instance and an Officer from Student Careers and Alumni Affairs in the second instance. For Study 2, because it was an on-line anonymous survey, the follow-up was in the form of a reminder to complete the survey within the given time limit, a time limit that was extended on numerous occasions in an endeavour to reach the target of 200 participants.

Transferability to generalisability. In relation to qualitative research, transferability refers to the “extent to which aspects of qualitative results can be ‘transferred’ to other groups of people or contexts” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 282). Transferability of a study is enhanced through describing the specific contexts, participants, settings and study circumstances in intricate detail so that the potential for transferring the results to other contexts or participants can be judged by the reader. Schofield (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) concurs with this idea, with the onus being put back on the readers to ultimately decide the extent to which findings can be generalised to another situation. With small sample sizes, researchers need to be cautious when generalising results in the conventional sense. In fact, according to Braun and Clarke (2013), some researchers discount generalisability as being a meaningful goal of qualitative research because the nature of qualitative research is context-bound with a particular interest in the detail of the phenomenon under investigation. Study 1 of my research is an example of this. On the other hand, Braun and Clarke (2013) acknowledge that other researchers see qualitative research results as generalisable, but in a different way.

For example, Cohen et al., (2007, p. 135) offer an explanation of generalisability as relating to “generalising *within* specific groups or communities, situations or circumstances validly and, beyond, to specific *outsider* communities, situations or circumstance”, with internal validity having the greater significance. According to Cohen et al., internal validity is about sustainability by the data as regards the explanation of an event, issue or data provided by a research study. Accuracy which can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative research is also an important component when describing the events being researched.

O’Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) point out the typical aim of researchers conducting studies in the quantitative tradition is to generalise to other participants and settings hence going beyond their study.

Dependability versus reliability. As defined by O’Dwyer and Bernauer (2014), in the qualitative tradition where the researcher is thought to be the primary instrument, *dependability* or *reliability* in the case of quantitative research, relates to the *consistency* of data produced by particular instruments. Gasson (as cited in Morrow, 2005) speaks of the

components of *consistency* as being examined across time, researchers and analysis techniques. The aims of the process relating to findings should be that they are both explicit and replicable. This can be achieved by thorough tracking of the research design, and a comprehensive audit trail. Included in this are activities and processes, noting any influences on data collection and subsequent analysis. Keeping track of themes and categories, with analysis notes as you proceed is also recommended. The audit trail is then available to others to examine and judge for consistency (Gasson, 2004). The process to meet these conformities in my research is evidenced throughout.

Reliability can be described as producing the same results if the same measures were administered by different researchers to a different participant group (Yardley, 2008). Hussey and Hussey (1997) see reliability as belonging to the research findings and linked to credibility, along with validity. The evidence, along with the conclusions, needs to stand up to close scrutiny (Raimond, as cited in Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

According to Braun and Clark (2013), because quantitative researchers often aim to generalise results, they seek to minimise the influence of the researcher insofar as tools not being influenced by the data collector, participants, or the context. This is in direct contrast to those undertaking research in the qualitative paradigm, where researchers actively engage with participants of the study, thereby running the risk of influencing the research process and knowledge it produces (Yardley, 2008). Themes or categories in qualitative research also lend themselves to a great deal of subjectivity on the part of the researcher, as they depend on the researcher's knowledge, interest areas, and experience. In addition, qualitative researchers rely heavily on context when extracting individual meanings and experiences. As such, dependability or consistency are much more applicable terms to use with qualitative research, given the contrasting aims of the two research paradigms.

Confirmability to objectivity. In relation to qualitative research, Morrow (2005) acknowledges that confirmability is based on the recognition that research is never objective. She points out that accountability through an audit trail and management of subjectivity are applicable and these are similar features as those pertaining to the achievement of dependability. An obligation is also placed on the researcher to satisfactorily link the data, analytic processes, and findings in order for the reader to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow, 2005). Furthermore, Gasson (as cited in Morrow, 2005) insists in relation to the researcher, that beliefs and any pet theories or biases should not enter into the findings. It is the situation being researched that should be the main focus.

The positive value of objectivity in a quantitative paradigm is equivalent to subjectivity in the qualitative paradigm. Research by default is a *subjective* process as our history, interests, values, assumptions, perspectives and politics are inadvertently a part of the research (Braun & Clark, 2013). The research process then, from the time a topic is chosen to the choice of participants to the data collection, analysis, and findings, will reflect these features and this is particularly evident in qualitative research. The same can be said for the participants who will come with their own experiences, perspectives and values. The way to best manage these apparent “biases” is through reflexivity where a critical reflection on the knowledge produced and the researcher’s role in this production is undertaken (Braun & Clark, 2013). A more detailed study of reflexivity appears in an earlier section of this chapter.

Ethics

Participant protection. Creswell (2009, p. 87) raised the importance of researchers protecting their participants because “research essentially involves collecting data from people about people.” Trust development, the promotion of research integrity and guarding against misconduct and impropriety are additional features of the data collection process. Issues such as personal disclosure, authenticity and credibility of the research report and the role of researchers in cross-cultural contexts are ethical in nature and need close scrutiny (Israel & Hay as cited in Creswell, 2009).

Snape and Spencer (as cited in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 20) point out that researchers generally “take particular care in data collection to minimise the extent to which the researcher influences the views of research participants during the course of interviews or focus groups. . . but we can never obtain this aspiration fully. . . because of our ontological stance of subtle realism.” Reflexivity, self-reflection on how bias through background and beliefs may creep into qualitative research practice, is a suggested solution whereby researchers provide as many technical details of conduct and bias as possible. This allows others to “scrutinise the ‘objectivity’ of the investigation.”

A broad definition of *ethics*, according to Johnson and Christensen (2012, p. 99) is, “principles and guidelines that help us uphold the things we value.” Schlenker and Forsyth (as cited in Johnson & Christensen, 2012) identify three basic approaches that researchers adopt when considering ethical issues—deontology, ethical scepticism and utilitarianism—with the approaches differing in the criteria used to decide right from wrong.

The deontological approach postulates that ethical issues should be based on a universal code with particular actions being deemed inherently unethical. An example of one

such action is deception of participants during research (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). As further explained by Johnson and Christensen, (2012), ethical sceptics, those who dispute the existence of moral knowledge, while not denying the importance of ethical principles, would argue that concrete and inviolate moral codes as identified by deontologists, are unable to be formulated. This is because, in their view, ethical practices are relative to the culture and time and inevitably become a matter of individual consciences, with researchers doing what they consider to be right (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Utilitarianism, in relation to ethical practices, advocates that judgements made in research studies should hinge around the consequences of the study for the research participants. As such, “ethical decisions are based on weighing potential benefits against potential costs.” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 99). These decisions also take into account the potential the research has for generating important knowledge and benefiting the human race in general.

I can see value in all three approaches and deem it unnecessary to follow one over the others when all three can be combined into a more comprehensive and worldly approach. Given the fact that I am conducting my research in a foreign country, an important starting point for me was the awareness and recognition of the Islamic culture and how I needed to eliminate any practices during the many stages of the research that may disrespect that culture.

Diener and Crandell (as cited in Johnson and Christensen, 2012) further identify three areas of ethical concern for social and behavioural scientists—those of the society and science relationship, professional issues and the treatment of research participants. It is the last area that is deemed the most important, as conducting research with humans can create both physical and psychological harm. Even though educational research is not thought of as being dangerous in nature, it is wise to be attuned to possible issues.

An ethical framework is therefore needed to be developed by researchers when choosing participants for a study. Such a framework includes access to people, places and ways in which what is observed is to be represented and used and guides how principles such as confidentiality, anonymity and rights of access are constructed (Barbour & Schostak, 2005). Females were chosen for the study as it was culturally preferable for a female researcher to work with female participants in the Gulf, and methodologically feasible since I had access to current and past graduates through my work place. The presence of ethics committees governing research in organisations necessitates consideration, with my situation being no different. The nationwide system in which the college where participants were

drawn was situated, had strict rules and guidelines regarding research. See Appendices B and C for ethical clearance letters from HCT and USQ.

Confidentiality and anonymity. In general, methods for gathering, analysing and interpreting data together with the evaluation type being undertaken, the context in which it is constructed and the availability of resources all need to be considered when undertaking research (Abma & Schwandt, 2005). These features are closely aligned with ethical and political considerations.

For example ethical practices such as confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to regarding participants and the location of the interviews. Johnson and Christensen (2012) state that confidentiality protects the participant's identity whereas anonymity keeps the identity of the participant from everyone including the researcher. Interviews that were conducted within the college for practical reasons such as time constraints on the participants, were done in sound-proof rooms away from the rest of the work stations and students. Those interviews done outside the college environment usually took place in a quiet coffee shop with minimum disturbance from other diners.

The community then within which my research took place was first a female community, and second, situated in the private sector in Dubai. Because local female workers are a minority in this sector, it was important to protect their identities from their employers and to an extent, perhaps from their families although minimal risk in both cases was anticipated. As acknowledged by Flinders (as cited in Mills & Gale, 2004), the type of risk would appear to centre more on embarrassment or unwanted publicity possibly as a result of the publication of the research findings.

Walford (2005) challenged the assumption that anonymity is both possible and desirable, particularly in relation to qualitative forms of research. He claimed that, in this type of research, "co-participants in the research play a vital part in co-constructing and co-conducting the research", and as such, deserve to be acknowledged by name in subsequent publications if they so desire (p. 84). He also addressed the likelihood of participants, whether individuals or organisations, being able to be easily identified by the type of information supplied, particularly if the results are released to the community from which the data have been gathered. To mitigate such happenings, Walford (2005) suggested that a representative of the organisation be involved in contributing to the study throughout so that any perceived problems with the findings may be addressed and so that the final account is more balanced in nature.

Informed consent. Homan (as cited in Wiles et al., 2005) made the valid point that true informed consent is somewhat unrealistic, as it is very rare that participants are given a full explanation of their role, so are therefore unclear of what participation actually involves. As such, Homan (as cited in Wiles et al., 2005, p. 11) stated that true informed consent “exists in rhetoric more than reality.” He argued that it is almost impossible for the researcher to predict all possible outcomes of participation prior to the start of the research so a balance needs to be struck through a carefully-considered consent form.

Du Bois in Iltis (2006) regards the informed consent process itself as a way to build a partnership with participants and may even improve the quality of data albeit at the expense of participant numbers. He clarifies this by explaining the possibility of spending time after the distribution of both the PIS and the informed consent – time that is utilised to clarify uncertainties potential participants may have before and during the study.

Other features relevant to the data collection process include developing trust, promoting the integrity of research and guarding against misconduct and impropriety all of which if not adhered to, could reflect negatively on researchers and subsequent research results. From an ethical stance, issues such as personal disclosure, authenticity and credibility of the research report, the role of researchers in cross-cultural contexts and issues of personal privacy through forms of Internet data collection according to Israel and Hay (as cited in Creswell, 2009) needed to be carefully controlled throughout the data collection.

Stakeholders and gatekeepers. The Centre for Community Health and Development at The University of Kansas (2018) define stakeholders as those who may have influence or may be affected by an effort, with motivation being philosophically, academically or politically oriented. Because of the importance of stakeholder analysis which assists in clarifying roles and identifying purposes, it is best to classify them into primary, secondary and key.

In relation to my study, the primary stakeholders will be those belonging to the United Arab Emirates ethnic group and myself, an expatriate who has lived in the United Arab Emirates and worked with female, Emirati students for some 18 years. More specifically, the UAE ethnic group comprises female graduates currently working, or those who have worked in the private sector in Dubai, willing to share their experiences.

Secondary stakeholders would be, by default to a certain degree, employers, family members of participants, the college I work for and that subsequently supplied the database for the initial release of Study 2. Other organisations that supplied databases for access to potential participants were also considered as secondary stakeholders. The system-wide

Colleges of Higher Education, of which Dubai Women's College is one, could also be considered a secondary stakeholder as results of the final, published dissertation may be of interest to them as regards planning for future programs and internships across the colleges. Government policy makers may also utilise the findings of the research to better determine how to encourage more female graduates to join the private sector since the public sector is at saturation point. They may also endeavour to enforce more strictly existing policies such as the Emiratisation policy that demands a certain percentage of locals work in private organisations.

Ethical considerations surface once again when researchers are considered as stakeholders in their own research. Deep and careful reflection of their roles is advocated by Danaher, Danaher and Moriarty (2003) who also concur with Pring (as cited in Danaher et al., 2003) who in turn points out that under certain circumstances, researchers' roles may extend to that of gatekeepers whereby they employ restrictive practices in relation to participants or data to protect participants.

Recording and representing participant voices. There is always a danger when collecting data from the use of specific questions in a structured interview-type situation that the researcher's implicit construction of reality may interfere. As such, data gathered from non-structured interviews may offer greater insight into how participant reality is constructed, allowing them to explore beyond the scope of what specific questions may produce (Yin, 2012). In regard to Study 1 and Study 3 of my research, although there were specific questions for participants to respond to in keeping with the bases of the research, the SCCT, there were opportunities for them to elaborate and in some cases articulate more generalised beliefs from experiences triggered through a particular question. For example, Salma in Study 1 agitated by her perceived mistreatment by a former manager, finished by saying that women in general were much more capable than men even though this may not be reflected in their position. As such, it was my responsibility to represent this point in the write-up and subsequent analysis, regardless of whether I believed the generalisation was justified with sufficient evidence.

Another area the researcher needs to be wary of when conducting in-depth interviews as part of a qualitative study is the possibility of becoming privy to sensitive information that may not necessarily be part of the study. Johnson and Christensen (2012) issue a warning on this in particular in relation to educational research. Mason (as cited in Silverman, 2001) also warns of the changing direction the study may take, especially where qualitative studies are

concerned, and suggests constructing a plan in advance to cater for subsequent ethical dilemmas possibly arising from such direction change.

Walker-Gibbs (2004) speaks of self-reflexivity, an awareness of subjectivities and biases and paying attention to the context of the study as being essential when doing research. Given my background and the context in which the study was conducted, from time to time these aspects proved challenging. Because of my experience of female Emiratis over some 18 years, some of the more common myths from the West such as Middle-Eastern women being down-trodden in a largely male-dominated society, could be dispelled to a certain degree. However, the very fact that I worked with a minority of local women in the process of being educated or who had been educated meant I had to be careful not to generalise too quickly about the perceived “lack of glass ceiling” somewhat offset, in this instance, by the Emiratisation policy put in place by the federal government.

The unquantifiable nature of the “glass ceiling” in itself is further testament of the need to be cautious. In a recent series on BBC World television, a “broken ladder” was added to the concept of “glass ceiling” with regards to female careers worldwide and in Silicon Valley, the results of which did not bode well for women (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2017). Worldwide, women constitute a mere 12% of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and, in Silicon Valley, women hold just one in ten senior positions. Silicon Valley female workplace woes included unwanted sexual advances (60%), feeling left out of social events (65%), and being told they were too aggressive (84%), all of which led to the concept of the “broken ladder”, the pre-runner to “the glass ceiling”, and to women quitting technology jobs at more than double the rate of men. This suggests that when pressure, especially that which is societal in nature, is applied to women to opt out of the workplace, then the “broken ladder” label may be more appropriate than that of “glass ceiling”.

As a concluding remark, this research was done by a female researcher with female participants in an attempt to explore perceptions of the private sector working world through the SCCT (Lent, 2005). Some may classify this a ‘feminist research’, although this was not the intention. Emphasis on the affective components of research is seen by Fallow and Cook (as cited in Crotty, 1998) as a major feature of feminist epistemology. It is their belief that women are more familiar with emotions and their meanings – an attribute that is part of the critical reflexivity characteristic aligned with the feminist approach to knowledge. Taped interviews serve to reflect what Moore (2004, p. 108) refers to as “truths” – truths that have emanated from “shared understandings of reality built through mutual trust and negotiation”. Face-to-face interviews allow relatively free-flow of conversation between participant and

researcher with any possible misunderstandings being clarified on the spot and in the member checking afterwards.

The following chapter introduces the first of three studies undertaken in this research—a qualitative study comprising five face-to-face interviews. Research design, participants and recruitment strategies together with the interview procedure is detailed. Information on data analysis and management follow. A results section followed by a discussion conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY 1

This chapter details Study 1, phase one of what was to become a three phased mixed-methods study and was qualitative in nature. Based on Lent's (2005) SCCT, measures related to specific domain and dependent variables of interest were facilitated through the interviews in the study. Interviews were employed to extract participant perceptions with interview items specifically targeting the SCCT's main constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting. Demographics collected were analysed as background control variables only, as they were not of theoretical interest.

Participant recruitment strategies involve mandatory practices such as the dispersion of participant information sheets and consent forms, both of which should be read and signed by participants prior to the study. At all times ethical parameters should be adhered to and these are discussed in the paragraphs that follow. Interview procedures including interview items are explained in depth. The chapter concludes with an in-depth analysis of the collected data with coding and themes being identified and a discussion on the implications of these findings.

Research Design

Study 1 used Lent's (2005) SCCT to measure the suitability of the theory in a Middle Eastern context. Results of Study 1, qualitative in nature, were then used to test the application of the SCCT (Lent 2005) on a wider population in the form of Study 2, an on-line quantitative study. It was surmised that there may be an opportunity to further develop aspects of the SCCT after results of all three studies were analysed.

The underlying essence of all qualitative research as depicted by O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014, p. 33) is to "understand participant perceptions and how phenomena are lived and experienced by them." One of the tools for extracting participant perceptions is the interview. As pointed out by Braun and Clarke (2013), with experience-type research questions, as was the case with this study, interviews are ideally suited. In this instance, participants were asked their perceptions on a subject that they had a personal stake in—their own career path and as a result, generated responses were enriched with detail. In addition, as a researcher who values the belief that others construct and inflict their own perception of reality, a reality based on values and experiences, it seemed appropriate to initiate what ultimately became a three-phase study with in-depth interviews. With regard to the interview type, semi-structured interviews allowing for scope in unanticipated issues were conducted to cater for the needs and demands of the research question, the methodological approach, interview context and participant individuality (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Participants. Participants for Study 1 interviews were college students close to graduating from the 4-year bachelor program and colleagues at a government institution in the United Arab Emirates. The three college students were all working as were the two colleagues and all worked closely with the researcher in either a student/teacher capacity or as a colleague. They were from a range of career backgrounds – banking, insurance and finance and accounting, with three out of five currently working or having worked in banking. This is in keeping with the tendency of female Emiratis when joining the private sector predominantly opting to work in the banking sector. Banks in the UAE are held to a quota system based on the percentage of Emiratis each year but as has been pointed out by Clarke (as cited in Marmenout & Lirio, 2014), just 35% of those employed are Emiratis.

Wheeler, Shanine, Leon and Whitman in their 2014 study on student-recruited samples in organizational research found that these samples were not substantially demographically different from non-student-recruited samples and that any differences found in observed correlations of such samples would not lead to different practical conclusions from the findings. As such, it was felt that sampling from the student population would not interfere with the validity of the study.

Of the five participants, two were married with children. With the exception of one, all had worked in industry for over 8 years, with the majority of those years being spent in the private sector. All participants were in non-managerial positions at the time of the interviews, although some had held managerial positions in the past. Participant ages ranged from early 23 to 33. The research was conducted with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Higher Colleges of Technology and the Ethics Committee of the University of Southern Queensland. (See Appendices B & C) All five participants were known to the researcher in a student/teacher capacity.

Participant profiles. Salma was a 27 year old who lived at home and who had worked in insurance for 8 years before switching to a government position in 2014. She majored in Human Resources during her college years graduating in February 2016 but intended doing a second major in Quality. Sumaya, a 28 year old, was married, with a young daughter who had worked for the banking industry for 8 years before switching to the government sector 2 years previously. She too majored in Human Resources. She intended moving cities after graduation and once again looking for a position in the private sector—a position that would utilise her Human Resource major. Dana was a 23 year old who had lived and studied nanoengineering on a Government-sponsored scholarship in Canada for 3 years before returning home. She then switched to a business degree to better accommodate

her knowledge and skills and simultaneously took up a full-time position in a private bank. Fatma, a 33 year old, was married with one child and expecting a second. She had spent 8.5 years in the private sector—she worked for two banks and an airline during this time—and had worked for the government for the past 4 years. Her intention was to re-join the private sector within a year. Amina, a 30 year old, currently worked in the government sector after 8 years working for a private bank. Although she enjoyed the challenge of the private sector, she was also enjoying those of the government sector and had no plans to change this anytime soon.

Recruitment strategies. The selection of students could be seen as representing both convenience and purposive sampling—convenience in that I had already built a rapport with the students over the year of working with them, making it easier to arrange interview times to suit both our schedules, and purposive because these participants were judged to have the desired characteristics (private sector employees who had shown great interest in my research) and relevant experience that I wished to explore. With the exception of one participant, they had all worked for at least 8 years.

In keeping with standard protocol for all research, participants were initially approached and individually given verbal information on what the research encompassed—a study of career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai—and what it hoped to achieve which was a better understanding of the subsequent career paths through the perceptions of the participants. They were invited to participate and then sent a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (see Appendix D) and Consent Form (see Appendix E) to complete and return as acknowledgement of their intended participation. See Appendices D and E for these forms. The Participant Information Sheet reflected respect for the culture and society in which the research was undertaken (and subsequently reported) and showed demarcation of boundaries for both the researcher and participants.

All five participants agreed to be interviewed and audio taped and were assured of their anonymity at all times, with pseudonyms being used throughout the transcripts and in the resulting reporting of findings-

Researcher roles and relationships. The fact that I had worked with the participants prior to the data collection for at least 6 months and in most cases closer to 12 months, in the role of teacher or colleague, assisted me in making sense of responses in the context in which they were asked and in the subsequent identification of initial codes and formulation of themes. Being familiar with the backgrounds and the personalities of these participants was a distinct advantage and almost amounted to a member checking within my own mind as to

whether responses reflected the traits and mind sets I had witnessed in these participants over the previous 12 months. This was an attempt to present the most accurate analysis of the data possible without compromising researcher reflexivity. As such my role could be classified as bordering on an insider role in the first instance but because of not belonging to the community, culturally or socially, an outsider role in the end. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), an insider researcher belongs to the group or community to which they are researching.

Sources of data – interviews. O’Dwyer and Bernauer (2014, p. 4) generally define research as “a systematic process to make things known that are currently unknown by examining phenomena multiple times and in multiple ways.” Collected data serve to assist in answering the questions around which the research revolves. As such, it seems pertinent to return to the main focus of the research which is a career path of a female Emirati graduate in the private sector in Dubai. Specifically the collected data sought to clarify the role of individual beliefs in shaping career decisions while considering those environmental aspects that may affect these decisions.

Interview procedure. Prior to my consent form being given out to participants to sign in Study 1, a PIS was sent through to enable those potential participants to make a more informed decision on whether or not to participate. The initial PIS covered both studies but it was then thought it better to adjust it to specifically fit the qualitative and quantitative on-line studies. See Appendices D and F. Main content areas however remained the same in both cases explaining details such as the purpose, obligation, benefits, confidentiality, details and distribution of results of the intended research, funding and contact details of the researcher for further information. Details of who to contact regarding concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project were given with the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator being the point of contact. With regards to form design, Silverman (2001, p. 270) warns of “contaminating the research by informing subjects too specifically about the research question to be studied.” As such a balance needed to be struck between neither deceiving participants by deliberately hiding information or feeding them too much information to potentially invalidate responses.

As identified by Du Bois in Iltis (2006), time can be spent with participants after the distribution of the PIS and consent forms to clarify uncertainties encountered before and during completion of the questionnaire. This was not the case in either of my studies however as I had no direct contact with participants in Study 2 after the survey went live. I believe this was because I was physically and mentally removed from the participants as they

went about their busy, everyday working lives. The PIS was translated into Arabic for the on-line survey as it was considered a safer method to ensure understanding of what was required. See Appendix G for the translated version. The PIS by default, ultimately became the consent form for the on-line survey through the “agree to participate” button that enabled participants to continue with the survey. A minor error in the college name translation was picked up by the Industry Liaison Officer and corrected before the survey went live.

In order to minimise the possibility that participants may have been pressured to participate in the study even though the PIS clearly informed them they were free to withdraw at any time, I chose graduates that I was not working with at the time for Study 1. Johnson and Christensen (2012) refer to this pressure as covert pressure with the over-riding belief being that withdrawal from the study may affect them in an adverse way. The traditional power relationship that may exist between teacher and student was also minimised as participants were in themselves, managers and mothers with in many cases similar work experiences to my own. It was the hope that these participants were genuinely interested in providing information about the little-known private sector in Dubai – information that ultimately lead to a more enlightened understanding of the sector.

Interviews with the five participants were spread over a period of 3 weeks. They took place at locations convenient to both parties – in the college on three occasions and at outside venues on the other two occasions. They were audio taped and within 2 days of an interview, transcribed. Immediately after the interview, potentially useful notes that may have enriched the gathered data were taken in an endeavour to enhance responses and give a context to them. See Appendix A. Audio tapes were re-checked after the initial transcription to ensure accuracy and transcriptions were sent to participants for checking. Only one of the participants contributed additional information to that already given in the interview.

It was agreed that the list of interview questions would be sent to participants in advance of the interviews for both preparation and clarification purposes. Questions that may have resulted in answers reflecting cultural influence were carefully worded so as to avoid any sign of bias or judgement, given the culture is based on Islam. In a similar fashion, transcripts of the interviews were forwarded to participants within a week of the interview having taken place. This was for member checking, with participants being invited to comment on any misunderstandings of the question, leading to misrepresented responses and to add any other relevant points that would enhance the quality of the information required for the research. At a later date, participants were invited to read the analysis of their contribution, a more complex, advanced form of member checking.

As described by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 282), participants are given the opportunity to comment on the “trustworthiness or authenticity of what has been produced,” one way in which to ensure a good fit between interpretations and representations of participant experiences and their own understanding of their experiences. It should be noted that, in some interview extracts, data were cleaned up to avoid unnecessary or irrelevant detail. This was generally indicated by ‘[...]’. A definitive effort was also made to provide extracts from all participants to ensure a spread of evidence across the dataset, an important feature of pattern-based analysis.

Interview questions. In conducting qualitative research, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 80) point out that of particular importance is that, “the theoretical framework and methods match what the researcher wants to know, and that they acknowledge these decisions, and recognise them as decisions.” As such, questions for the interview were derived from the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting related to the success of performance from Lent and Brown’s (2006) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). See Appendix H for a copy of the interview questions.

The questions were a mix of open-ended and closed questions. See Table 4.1 for the question item sets. An example of an open-ended question was: Can you please tell me about how your career happened...and how it has all turned out? An example of a closed question was: What is your age? According to H. Rubin and I. Rubin (2011), qualitative interviewers listen to hear the meaning of what interviewees tell them and, when they cannot figure out that meaning, they ask follow-up questions to gain clarity and precision. They further emphasise the importance of conversational partnership, whereby interviewing is a joint process of discovery that aims for an understanding and acceptance of, as well as trust in, the interviewee as a reliable source of information.

Table 4.1

Study 1 Item Sets

Item Sets
Set 1: Demographics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 open-ended and closed items (researcher developed) related to age, marital status, number of children, major, sector
Set 2: Self-Efficacy (Fouad & Guillen, 2006)

- 4 open-ended items related to career perception – events, experiences, stories that constitute their career to date

Set 3: Outcome Expectations (Fouad & Guillen, 2006)

- 3 sub-sets of open-ended items related to social, materialistic and self-approval/evaluative forms of outcome expectations

Set 4: Goal Setting – Performance oriented (Dik et al., 2008)

- 1 open-ended item relating to three specific performance goals participants have set
-

The goal of the interviews was to potentially generate a set of alternative models that could be tested as competing causal structures against the original SCCT model of choice process. MacCallum and Austin (2000) stress the importance of researchers considering the possibility that alternative models may fit the data in cases where support is seen for a specific model. Specification and evaluation of multiple a priori models is a method that protects against confirmation bias and is especially effective in the case of equivalent models. Factors of the SCCT theory to be considered then were beliefs pertaining to self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goal setting related to the success of performance, and broader factors such as gender and role expectations. The purpose of such questions was to situate participant perceptions of their career paths in the context of the Middle East in an endeavour to examine the face validity of the SCCT. In short, what does self-efficacy for example, look like to these female graduates? How does goal setting influence career outcome expectations and vice versa and how might outcome expectations play a role in the setting of career goals?

Data analysis. In a mixed method study, the qualitative meta-analysis as defined by Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson and Suarez-Orozco (2018, p. 40) is “a form of inquiry in which qualitative research findings about a process or experience are aggregated or integrated.” There are numerous aims of the analysis including to identify gaps in research or to generate new theoretical or conceptual models. Study 1 sought to effectively further explore the fit of the SCCT (Lent, 2005) within the Middle-Eastern context since the theory was ostensibly designed for a Western context. The possibility of a new conceptual model better suited to the Middle-Eastern context was kept in mind during the data analysis process.

All five interviews were taped and transcribed within 2 days of the interview. Notes that were taken immediately following the interview were accessible to the researcher during this time. Prior to any coding, transcriptions were sent to participants to be checked for accuracy. A coloured coding table was then set up matching the constructs of the SCCT –

self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting with an additional construct of a self-efficacy/outcome expectation combination for that data that could arguably fit into either category. Entire transcripts were copied and colour coded to the “original data” column and thoughts regarding certain aspects of the content of the transcripts were added to the second “comments” column. Additional comments were added through the comments tool on the review option in word – comments that justified why an extract from the original transcript had been coloured coded in a specific way and ultimately linking these extracts to the constructs of the SCCT. See Appendix I for this table. Examples of this are:

“...but my career actually started in 2008 because it was just then [...] that I started interfering more in my career”. (Comment: S-E as “interfere” suggests control. Could also be O-E as “interfere” suggests deliberate action for an outcome-expectancy).

“This is all because of my experience because working [...] in different organisations and companies will eventually lead to more experience than working in one company only.” (Comment: O-E. If I work in more organisations, then I gain more experience.)

Saldana (2009) cited codes as representing and capturing a datum’s primary content and essence while Lichtman summarised the primary processes for analysing qualitative data as “coding, categorizing and conceptualising” (O’Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014, p. 36). Coding the data enables the researcher to detect frequencies – those that are most common – and patterns – those that occur together (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). From the codes emerge the categories and ultimately, the themes. In thematic analysis however, themes are akin to categories or higher-level concepts derived during analysis through clustering codes (Birks, Chapman & Francis as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The next step was to set up a second table headed “Themes from Codes – for aspects of the SCCT”, in which the four constructs, plus the combination of the Self-Efficacy (SE) and Outcome Expectation (OE) construct, were listed, and then data pertaining to these across all five interview transcripts were extracted and pulled together. An additional heading was added—“other”—for those data that were considered relevant to career paths, but did not fit specifically into the SCCT constructs. Examples of this were familial and societal influences and expectations, both positive and negative, and workplace influence, again of a positive and negative nature. Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 227) remind the researcher that generally, “a pattern-based analysis will not just look within the question, but across the whole dataset to determine themes.” That is, it cuts across responses. In addition,

rather than keeping data collated by question, keeping it collated by participant assisted in pattern seeking across the dataset instead of around questions.

Braun and Clarke (2013) also distinguish between selective and complete coding. As inferred by the labels, selective coding is identifying and selecting instances of the phenomenon of interest while complete coding is identifying “anything and everything of interest or relevance to answering your research question, within your entire database” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 206). My data had undergone complete coding, in that all data relevant to my research question had been coded, with a more rigorous selection being made later. This is evidenced by the “other” heading. In addition, the codes might be considered researcher-derived as they “go beyond the explicit content of the data...invoking the researcher’s conceptual and theoretical frameworks to identify implicit meanings within the data” (Braun & Clarke (2013, p. 207). The construct of self-efficacy in the SCCT is latent in nature, so it stands to reason that codes pertaining to this particular data set will be researcher-derived.

Notes that amounted to memos, and that subsequently became the basis of the themes and codes, were added to the bottom of each (SCCT construct) section serving as a summary of captured ideas and their potential role in addressing the main research question. See Appendix J for Coding Themes. Memo-keeping, as described by Braun and Clarke (2013, p.215), is a grounded theory technique and is “a process of recording analytic insights that provide more depth and complexity than codes.” Analytic ideas can be refined and developed as you continually add to previous memos and these become the basis for the eventual write-up.

Examples of memo keeping regarding self-efficacy are:

More **achievements**. Golden Star Award. Chairman **recognition**. **Promotion** to relationship manager. **Pride** in herself. **Reputation** and **headhunting**.

Examples of memo keeping regarding outcome expectations are:

Role model influence of success on friends and colleagues. **Admiration** from others. **Societal reaction** to success. Contribution or giving back to society. Giving back to your country. **Expectations of society**. **Materialistic gains**.

Codes. Initial coding of the data, revolved around the main constructs of the SCCT, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting, along with additional data relevant to and influential in relation to a career path. From the early stages, similarity and overlap were reviewed and identified in relation to self-efficacy and outcome expectation constructs resulting in a separate colour code featuring a combination of these two constructs. There

was also overlap in the self-efficacy, outcome expectation construct and the goal setting construct data, but these were coded separately. Charmaz (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 225) refer to this as data patterning, which, in turn, may ultimately lead to "...a central organising concept for a theme." If codes are rich and complex enough, they may stand alone as themes.

In this study, seven codes that ultimately differentiated between the concepts, issues and ideas in the collected data were applied to the dataset. The dataset hinged around the three constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting from the SCCT. See Appendix K for coding themes with extracts. These codes fed into the main themes and are identified below in the themes section.

Themes. Braun and Clarke (2013) identify questions to ask that will assist in the development of themes and will assist to differentiate them from codes. These questions include the quality of the theme, the boundaries, the amount of sufficient meaningful data to support the theme, including the coherence amongst data, and the contribution of the theme to the overall story. Theme titles as the central organising concept are also given credence. These points were kept in mind as I began to scan the transcripts of the interviews.

Braun and Clarke (2013) acknowledge that the purpose of themes is to address the research question, so not all codes in reporting of the patterned meaning will be relevant and, as such, may be let go. The overriding aim is "...the best 'fit' of analysis to answer the research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 230).

Further investigation of the coding then identified three key themes of achievements, impacts and expectations in relation to the overarching theme of the research: that of career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai. See Appendices J and K. These themes are identified in the definitions below and the overall story they tell about the data appears in the narratives that follow.

Data management. So far as the ethical side was concerned, all research requires a balance between potential benefits and costs as identified by Johnson and Christensen (2012). As indicated earlier, this is particularly relevant at every stage when conducting research in a foreign country as was my case. Stages can be said to have begun with both the topic and participant choice and continued with the dissemination of information to clarify the purpose of the research and the contribution to the wider community their participation would bring. Finally, I worked with them either face-to-face or through the on-line survey (see Study 2) to gather the data.

Recording and representing participant voices. Because of the delicate nature of conducting in-depth interviews, Mason (as cited in Silverman, 2001) speaks of the ethical need for a plan to counteract any divergence to the original study that may occur during the collection of data. It is therefore incumbent on the researcher to provide to participants purpose and possible effects of the study—something that was done in the PIS for my study and also explained when they were initially approached to participate in the study. See Appendix D for the PIS.

Confidentiality and anonymity. Ethical practices such as confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to regarding participants and the location of the interviews. Johnson and Christensen (2012) state that confidentiality protects the participant's identity whereas anonymity keeps the identity of the participant from everyone, including the researcher. Interviews that were conducted within the college for practical reasons, such as time constraints on the participants, and were carried out in sound-proof rooms away from the rest of the work stations and students. Interviews that were conducted outside the college environment usually took place in a quiet coffee shop with minimum disturbance from other diners.

It was especially critical that participants were given a pseudonym at the beginning of the recording and also on the transcription as data given was very confidential in nature especially when it came to opinions on different organisational work place practices. Nowhere was the correct name of the participant ever disclosed. As a researcher, my ultimate aim was to protect participants and other agencies involved in the research process as much as possible from an ethical and a political stand point – all this was to ensure a valid outcome. Creswell (2009, p. 87) raised the importance of researchers protecting their participants because “research essentially involves collecting data from people about people.”

Because of the nature of the environment on which the research was based, that is female Emirati graduates working in the private sector in Dubai, confidentiality was particularly important to those who participated in the interview as part of Study 1. This was because such graduates are in the minority. Mills and Gale (2004) point out that data from qualitative research is especially susceptible to being recognised because of its intensity for detailed description. However, because of the practice of confidentiality and because of the relatively small number of participants, most of whom worked in the popular banking and finance sectors, this was not considered cause for concern.

The original notion that embarrassment may have occurred due to a clash of certain Islamic societal traditions and values with an intended female career path, since prior to 2

decades ago, a female's primary role in society was considered to be that of a home-maker (Omair, 2008), was unsupported by the data. None of the participants in Study 1 made mention of a stifling of female careers in today's society – in fact females are supported and encouraged by leaders to educate themselves and contribute to society through joining the workforce as soon as possible after graduation. Study 2 questions also offered no obvious conflicts with societal values although these questions were taken from tests written for western societies.

Walford (2005) argued that anonymity may not always be the desired result in qualitative forms of research. He believed participants, referred to as co-participants, play a vital role and deserve to be acknowledged. As regards my research was concerned however, none of the participants wished to be acknowledged as they saw their role as contributing to a “bigger picture” of a career path in the private sector having been told of the somewhat larger quantitative study to follow. So far as identification of the sources of information in Study 1 were concerned, participants were five of some 300 plus business students enrolled in the college and split across five majors at that particular time, so identification by their particular organisations was virtually impossible.

So far as the organisation in which I conducted the research was concerned, a special committee scrutinised each research proposal, sometimes returning them if they were judged inappropriate or incomplete. This was not the case in my research but I did wait for permission by the college Director regarding usage of the Alumni database for potential participants for Study 2 the quantitative study. Eventually it was decided that I could not be given direct access to the database for confidentiality reasons, but that the survey would be sent via a link in an email by the marketing officer – a decision that was more beneficial to the outcome since Alumni members were more familiar with the marketing officer than with myself. The accompanying text in the email was translated in keeping with the survey itself.

Informed consent. Informed consent, or “agreeing to participate in a study having been informed of its purpose procedures, risks, benefits, alternative procedures and limits of confidentiality” Johnson and Christensen (2012, p. 107), was gained through signed forms before the interviews of Study 1 and was part of the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) in the on-line Study 2 with “agreement to participate” being mandatory for all respondents.

Stakeholders and gatekeepers. As indicated earlier, the primary stakeholders in this study were those belonging to the United Arab Emirates ethnic group and myself. In this environment, I can be classified an expatriate as I have lived in the United Arab Emirates and worked with female, Emirati students for some 18 years. More specifically, the UAE ethic

group comprised female graduates currently working, or those who have worked in the private sector in Dubai, willing to share their experiences.

According to Pring ((as cited in Danaher et al., 2003), researchers' roles may extend to those of gatekeepers because of protective practices by the researcher regarding gathered information. In my case, the gatekeeper's role was not utilised in the true sense of the definition as all collected data were analysed and reported.

Results

Because of the nature of the qualitative study, it was anticipated that there would be negative as well as positive aspects of reflections regarding career paths in the private sector in Dubai. However, participants were guaranteed anonymity for themselves and for secondary stakeholders. In this case secondary stakeholders were employers and family members as well as colleagues and friends. Not surprisingly, responses to questions were sometimes accompanied by emotions such as frustration and disbelief, all of which were recorded and inserted into the transcripts to portray and capture as accurate a picture as possible. There was no evidence in any of the interviews of Study 1 of reluctance to speak out regarding support or lack of so far as careers were concerned. I attributed this to participants feeling protected so far as information sources were concerned. All transcriptions are available on request.

Themes. Thematic analysis is a method for data analysis and, as described by Braun and Clarke (2013), is flexible in that it can be used to answer the majority of research questions and also to analyse almost any kind of data with larger or smaller databases. Themes can either be identified in a data-driven way (bottom-up), or in a more top-down way, where the data are used to explore specific theoretical ideas or embed these ideas in the analysis being conducted. This study was a combination of both, as although the constructs of the SCCT was the driving force behind the analysis of the data collected through the interviews, there was also scope to examine additional themes that emerged from the data.

A coloured coding table was then set up matching the constructs of the SCCT—self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting with an additional construct of a self-efficacy/outcome expectation combination for that data that could arguably fit into either category. See Appendix I for the Coding Table. Entire transcripts were copied and colour coded to the “original data” column and thoughts regarding certain aspects of the content of the transcripts were added to the second “comments” column. Additional comments were added through the comments tool on the review option in word. These comments justified

why an extract from the original transcript had been coloured coded in a specific way and ultimately linking these extracts to the constructs of the SCCT. Examples of this are:

“...but my career actually started in 2008 because it was just then . . . that I started interfering more in my career”. (Comment: S-E as “interfere” suggests control. Could also be O-E as “interfere” suggests deliberate action for an outcome-expectancy).

“This is all because of my experience because working in different organisations and companies will eventually lead to more experience than working in one company only.” (Comment: O-E. If I work in more organisations, then I gain more experience.)

Achievements. The ‘achievements’ theme captured both positive and negative aspects of the overarching theme of career paths. Participants constructed career gains in ways such as acknowledgement of, and subsequent recognition by others of, exceptional work produced over the course of their careers. Reflection by participants on these gains revealed positive self-recognition and clear future direction. Both these aspects fed into the SCCT constructs of self-efficacy and goal setting. Career challenges presented unfavourable aspects experienced by participants in relation to progress and their careers but, for the most part, these were accepted as being part of working life. Examples ranged from dealing with angry customers to projects given by managers that demanded knowledge, skills and abilities beyond what participants possessed at that time. All participants appeared to accept that such demands were common in the workplace and that overcoming and working through these would lead to better future prospects related to career. This philosophy is closely linked to the outcome expectation construct of the SCCT.

Career gains. For the most part, achievements were closely aligned with experience, past and current, in the working world and the subsequent effect these had, and are having on, participants’ careers and, indirectly, on their self-efficacy. These experiences were not always recognised at the time as being beneficial to career progress, as evidenced in Salma’s reflection of, “I gained a lot of experience and I didn’t understand this until I went to my second company...where everybody was saying, oh she’s good, she’s good, she’s good”. Salma was a 27-year-old who worked for 8 years in two different private insurance companies before switching to the government sector last year to further her career in a different field. She also recognised the benefits of moving companies by observing after joining her present company “I was happy that other departments are demanding for me. This

is all because of my experience because working in different organisations and companies will eventually lead to more experience ...”

Experiences within an organisation were also seen as valuable, as evidenced by Fatma, a 33-year-old mother of one, whose former positions were in the private and semi-private sectors, in her reflection of being “put on different rotations to understand the operation of that bank’ which she perceived as ‘strengthening her foundation to start and perform her actual job”. She also told of how she ended up as a relationship manager in a bank after 8 years, having proved to herself, “I could manage a team, I could manage portfolios . . . I reached that level that I can tell that I have the set of skills to manage people, to manage accounts, to prove myself”. These perceptions were closely tied to the self-efficacy construct of the SCCT, self-beliefs linked to specific performance, and demonstrated the application of the theory to Middle-Eastern culture (Lent, 2013). Dana, a 23-year-old, currently working in a bank, also demonstrated the importance of self-belief in relation to career gain when she recounted how she was given “sort of personal encouragement to pursue and work harder for what you want” when managers started asking her to apply for different positions because “they [could] see I have a lot of potential”. She also emphasised the importance of “doing something you love” in that it ultimately results in “keeping going further and maybe exploring other opportunities.” This was a direct link to the construct of outcome expectation of the SCCT, with the implication being that, if we pursue a career we are interested in, we will be more motivated to extend ourselves and more aware of further career opportunities.

Personal development in the form of training and study was seen as a major catalyst in progress in career paths for all participants. Sumaya, a 28-year-old mother of one with a banking career history, credited her recent graduation in the Human Resources major as resulting in a change of attitude towards her career in her “wanting to apply what I studied in my work, not just getting something . . . putting in my career path . . . now when I got my certificate it’s different”. This is in stark contrast to when she first started out, whereby “just getting a good opportunity with a good salary and just like that without seeing what I want (*sic*) to reach” was her ultimate goal. In this respect, her goal setting now appears to have become more focused and provided her with a new determination to pursue her chosen field. The assumption is that her newly acquired knowledge has led to an increase in self-efficacy, resulting in her expectation of being able to adequately fill a position in, the human resources field.

As is to be expected, promotion in the job was clearly perceived as being a step up the career ladder. Fatma tracked her progression over an 8-year period as moving from an operating team member, to warranty officer to relationship manager, a process that afforded her increased self-belief in her ability to succeed in the banking field. Amina, a 30-year-old who worked in banking for 8 years before returning to the government sector, expressed her delight at being promoted after 3 years in the banking industry in her comment, "...and hamdullah I was like climbing . . . the first year it was constant and, and I haven't got any promotion, and after the third year, I was like, climbing." Both participants related the feeling of pride that these achievements instilled in them—a pride that resulted from increased reputation and that is closely linked to self-worth.

Career challenges. Challenges arising for participants in their pursuit of a career in the private sector ranged from dealing with customers and managers to being ill-equipped to effectively deal with the reality of trying to strike a work/life balance while holding down a full-time position. Somewhat ironic in itself was the confession of one participant of not being challenged enough in her current position in a non-private organisation and of genuinely missing the challenge of being expected to do quality work. Another lamented on the challenge of potentially having to study abroad in order to further her career. This move was contradictory to her beliefs of her responsibility towards the family. This information overlaps the later themes of *Influences* and *Expectations*, with a clearer link being shown in those sections. What follows is a more detailed picture of the range of challenges in the context within which they were identified.

Dealing with difficult customers can be a negative aspect of any job and a possible barrier to positive self-efficacy, but some participants were able to turn such situations into learning experiences in unexpected ways, as evidenced in Salma's comment, "...dealing with angry customers also helped me a lot in understanding the employees around me . . . how they reacted", and Sumaya's realisation that "they were not fighting with me, they were fighting with the company. . . and I had to be more patient". The assumption here by the participant was that observation on the one hand, and patience on the other, were rewarded with customers who were easier to deal with which are examples of the construct of outcome expectations.

Dealing with managers, however, generally took on more of a negative connotation in the minds of participants, with the exception of Salma, who linked having to deal with different managers as giving her "ideas on how to deal with them, how to recognise if they were satisfied, happy, angry or sad...leading to experience." Others spoke of managers as

not being supportive, with Dana, in particular, wondering if “they really want you to become a better person...or grow in the company...or they just want you to stay there because you’re good at your job and that benefits them alone.” Fatma, while seeing the initial project set by the manager as being a direct challenge to her as a new staff member, acknowledged that when she succeeded, he was impressed, and gave her positive feedback.

Unsurprisingly, an awareness of the challenges of maintaining a work/life balance, an element that also re-appears as a dominant feature of the *Expectations* theme, was a cause of great concern to many participants. In particular, those who had already returned, or were planning to return, to study were under no illusion as to how difficult this may be, especially while holding down a full-time position. In reflection, Fatma looked back on the time she was working full-time and doing her master’s as being “a huge challenge for me to balance between my study, my personal life and my work”, but conceded how proud she felt when she finished. This past success may well have forced her to be doubting her abilities in her somewhat unfulfilling current position as she expressed the need to test herself again while wondering “...do I still have it or not?” Amina had no doubts as to the challenge her future enrolment in a PhD program would hold, having already completed her master’s degree. As she pointed out, it will be a “double” challenge, as she may be required to move abroad and move away from her family, but she saw commitment as possibly overcoming these obstacles.

Contextual impacts. The “impacts” theme was constructed by participants as comprising three areas of influence, those of family, society and the workplace. An underlying aspect common to this theme is that of obligation, which, in turn, is closely linked to expectations, the third theme. Maternal influences had a heavy presence in two participants’ decisions, whilst one participant was actually instrumental in influencing another family member in a positive way in regard to further study. As expected in a Muslim country, society plays a significant role in career choice, however, all participants were adamant that their families and indirectly society, had not influenced their decision to join the private sector. Employers, the work environment, and managers, were seen to be both encouragers and distractors of successful career paths. This theme can be linked to all three constructs of the SCCT—self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting – and the links will be discussed in more detail in the sections which follow.

Familial influencing. As identified by two of participants in the study, maternal figures have been a significant proximal influence on their careers. Salma recounted the almost 180 degree turnaround in attitude displayed by her mother from when she first joined

the private sector to the present time. She excused her mother's initial reaction to her working in the private sector by saying that, "old people have the belief that Government jobs are more secured, have less hours and less stress" but then conceded that her mother was, "eventually understanding and supporting . . . 'til today" of her decision to move into insurance in the private sector. Of particular importance to Salma was the way in which her mother motivated and encouraged her by telling her, "You can do better than this, these are not your limits...you're capable of better than this," as she was the only one in the family undertaking further study. Dana also credited her mother as, "actually giving me the idea of pursuing this path (business) rather than the engineering, although they (*sic*) were very supportive of that," after she forewent a scholarship at an overseas university and returned home to live and work. Her mother was again identified as being the major instigator behind the idea that she would eventually start a family business when she felt she had the required experience.

All participants spoke of the obvious and somewhat expected pride and happiness expressed by their families regarding their career achievements to date, as evoked in Fatma's comment, "they will always be proud of me of course...because they know I worked hard on myself to reach that position or that stage." Also present was family encouragement, as exhibited by Sumaya, in the form of them, "wanting me to be better and getting a higher position and higher certificate," and by Dana, in her observation of, "they feel that being successful in your career is a very good thing...something to be proud of...and they would like to see their kids being very successful." Amina's family can be seen to contravene traditional societal norms to a certain extent by encouraging her to take up study abroad. The unusual nature of this encouragement is demonstrated by Amina's rhetorical remark, "I got a scholarship to do the master's internationally. Will they allow me to go...yes...!", a remark informed by the societal tradition that females are generally not encouraged to move abroad if it means separation from family members. In addition, the fact that Amina was single, reinforced the significance of the family's decision that has spurred her on to consider undertaking doctoral studies abroad in the future. This was closely linked to her obligation to reach the top of her field in academia, an obligation that will be further discussed in the expectations section.

Amina also made reference to the fact that she had been an influence on her elder brother, immediately after she had gained her degree, by stating, "I thought of doing a master's...and right now he's doing a Master of Quality (laughs)...so at least something". Her laughter, together with the language used, suggested that, although she may not have

fully agreed with the brother's choice, the fact he had been positively influenced to further his study, was commendable.

Societal influencing. Societal influences, because of the nature of the culture within which the participants operate, play an important role in shaping careers. Participants acknowledged that they were women operating in a world that predominantly favours males, but they were quick to argue that this may not necessarily be the case for them. This was reflected in Salma's comment, "...nowadays our society is more open...and women are half of the society so we are being supported by our government, family, friends, so when we are highly successful in our career, it will be a positive feeling from them." Uppermost in this participant's mind was the late ruler his Highness Shaikh Mohamad bin Zayed (1918 – 2004), who did much to encourage sexual equality, including encouraging women to serve in the police and armed forces.

Dana supported Salma's perspective by saying about society, "...they will actually be very supportive because they do want to see people in the UAE go on to be highly successful, especially women..." She backed this up by adding, "In this recent year, there are actually a lot of women pursuing different kinds of jobs and positions that weren't there for them, only for men", and then alludes as to how it would be "a very good thing" if society saw them "getting there". The importance of the giving back to society through being a role model, either to friends or to people in general, was raised by Fatma who saw it as a societal expectation. This element will be discussed further in a later section on expectations.

In contrast, Sumaya raised the somewhat negative issue of some people in society being presumably unsupportive, when she said, "Ah society... I will face some jealousies in my life for how she (*sic*) reached this position... she doesn't deserve it', but went on to concede that, "... in general, they will be happy to see an Emirati in a (good) position." This once again raises the issue of how Emiratis see themselves as being apart from the expatriate workforce, which is unsurprising, considering Emiratis in 2013, made up just 0.5% of the private sector workforce ("Emiratis in private sector jobs to get public sector salaries, benefits", 2014).

Employer influencing. As was expected, given the nature of the research into career paths, employers' influence plays a pivotal role in participant's perspectives of career advancement, an influence that is both positive and negative in nature. Salma made special mention of what she perceived to be gender discrimination, generalising that: "...there are still people in the world who as CEOs will not be happy to give promotions to women and who would prefer men instead of women and girls." She consolidated her belief by adding

that, "...even if you are working double the men, still they are not happy with you, just because you're a woman." Although not directly identified by Salma, we also got a glimpse of racial discrimination as reflected in her statement, "...in my second company, the manager was giving promotion to people who came after me because they were the same nationality."

Another comment on this particular period of her career showed Salma's frustration through not receiving a promotion after 2 years when she emphatically stated, "But of course we can do work, we are better than men!" Her indignation of and eventual triumph over the situation was summed up in her final reaction; that of feeling "angry and making me go and search for another higher position just to show my manager I deserved more than this because when I was there he didn't understand my true value but after I left what happened...he hired three employees!" Perhaps unknowingly, she was exhibiting self-efficacy here along with a degree of outcome expectation—that of being confident she would get a better position if she made the effort to look elsewhere. As noted in the previous section on career challenges, Dana also doubted the intentions of both colleagues and managers from time to time, in that she felt as though they sometimes tied people into a position to make themselves look good. This suggested a more passive reaction to the outcome expectation of lack of future promotion opportunities.

Another negative reaction to managerial influence was highlighted by Fatma in the form of *Wasta*, a feature of Emirati society in which preferential treatment is given to family and friends with regards to position and promotion within a company. She cited this as an impediment on her otherwise flourishing career at the time by stating, "I saw myself growing in that bank . . . but the problem was my manager was put there by *Wasta*. He knew nothing." This in fact, was instrumental in Fatma leaving the company with the difficult decision to do so alluded to in her statement, "...there are external factors that force you sometimes to leave a place...and I didn't want to leave that place." Her action was in contrast to the usual passive acceptance of this societal phenomenon and indicated a self-belief in her ability of being able to find a job in another company where presumably she would be treated more fairly.

Fatma also expressed her reluctance to leave a company later in her career as evidenced in her remark, "I also didn't want to leave that company... but I was unfortunately working in an environment where everybody focused on gossiping rather than on their work and this affected me negatively." Her hindsight is revealed when she mused, "You know at the time I was so young...maybe if I was in the same position now, I would know how to

manage that...now it's way different." Again, the suggestion is here that she would be better able to cope given her experience in the interim years.

Positive experiences in relation to managerial support, as reported by Fatma, ranged from a manager who was partially supportive because, "he was too busy with what he was doing...and when we had that one-to-one meeting, he was just trying to wrap up fast" to a HR lady working with the manager who, "was always supportive." She then went on to recollect that the best experience came from a different bank describing the years here as, "the most important period of my career because of the amount of support I got from my managers and my colleagues," support that came in the form of various trainings to enhance learning and skills. Her outcome expectations from completing these trainings then were to be better equipped to carry out day-to-day tasks and responsibilities and ultimately work towards promotion.

Amina indirectly referred to managerial encouragement on the one hand, but pressure on the other when she recounted having been given praise for a piece of work, but then being delivered the ultimatum of promising to enrol in a credit proposal certification within a year. She also made mention of an institute she worked with as part of a project as, "supporting and always encouraging me...like during one of the huge openings in Singapore when I was presenter." Her appreciation for the support she received was evident when she recollected, "...when I left them to take another role, I told them, "Look, I'm not going to leave you and join another institute, I'm joining academia."

The reactions to the mix of encouragers and distractors in all three areas of influence—familial, societal and employer—illustrate the drive and motivation exhibited by all participants in their onward march to a successful career path. It would appear that these women were facing the same problems that Western women are facing, but, ironically, because of the support of their government, they may be that much closer than their Western counterparts in breaking through the elusive glass ceiling. Significant was the fact that this support has led to a belief of all participants that, despite negative interventions from society and managers, hard work and determination will lead to further progress in their career path in the private sector.

Expectations. The "expectations" theme explained how both the culture and the participants themselves exerted a certain amount of pressure to succeed in a career. In some cases, the two concepts were intertwined in that the participants felt obliged to perform and succeed or to back off an intended career because of societal values and expectations arising from those values. There was also the influence of the other expatriate society that has

certain predispositions regarding the work ethics of locals in the work place. This has a significant impact, as local employees in the private sector deal mostly with expatriates on a daily basis. Participants were very aware of this and one categorically stated she was out to prove the lazy locals stereotyping as incorrect. Again the three constructs of the SCCT can be seen to be present in this theme—self-efficacy in the form of feeling confident enough to challenge and prove themselves as capable of hard work leading to a better image of locals in future which, in turn, could result in more challenging goals being set by locals in an endeavour to progress their careers.

Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) considered cognitive, socio-cultural, and institutional factors in an endeavour to explore why more Emiratis fail to join the private sector in the UAE. The overall aim of the study was to understand the underlying attitudes, beliefs and thought processes shaping career expectations and career choice behaviour of these young Emirati job seekers.

My conclusions highlighted the proposition that self-efficacy may be reduced by pressure to work in the private sector because of the reputation of expatriates as having higher work ethics than locals working in the public sector, ultimately resulting in locals losing belief in their ability to compete for private sector jobs. The results suggest that there is a distinct interplay between self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting (Lent, 2013) and that this has had effect on career decision-making by Emiratis in relation to the private sector.

Culture obliging. As indicated in the previous section, Dana was mindful of the fact that today's society wanted and expected women to be more successful in the workplace. This success has been instigated by Government actions and encouraged by other female groups throughout the UAE. She opined that "it would be a very good thing" in relation to her succeeding in a role previously only considered for men, and the subsequent effect this success would have on women in society. Now that there are more female than male students enrolled in higher education, it stands to reason that, as these females graduate, they will occupy a larger percentage of the local workforce and may want to exert more control over their career progress. Fatma was more direct and went one step further in her perception of societal expectations, linking the concept of being a role model to friends or their friends in terms of "giving back to your country." She equated society with the broader aspect of country evoked in her statement, "Whatever you are doing you are giving back to society, giving back to your country, and this is what is expected from you."

Amina also saw her own success as being intertwined with the success of her family and, ultimately, the society in her observation, “If I add anything to myself, definitely it will be adding value to them and the UAE as we are like a small community.” She made reference to moving up a job hierarchy in the form of a “good position, in a good field in a good organisation” to exemplify this observation. She was, however, under no misapprehension as to how society sees a single female pursuing a doctorate when she stated, ‘I’m not married and I know the society will not agree with me taking another degree, especially a PhD and being highly educated.’ She defended her status with a lengthy explanation amounting to the non-difference of being kept busy by running around with “unnecessary stuff” or by filling the hours with study. She explicitly distinguished between what she perceived as the somewhat-harsh choices given by society as keeping busy with study or having children and challenges the ultimatum, by saying if she does not find “a person really good to marry”, she will continue her life and become a PhD holder. Further justification for her choice of study once again surfaced when Amina returned to the “giving back to community” theme, when she argued that she could contribute to her community in future because, “we need people who are in academia and who hold degrees.”

All three participants can be seen to be very much aware of, if not tied to, societal expectations of women in relation to their career paths. There is no question as to what their obligation to society is and how this obligation will be subsumed in their goal setting, but, in Amina’s case, it is clear that she will be fulfilling that obligation on her own terms. Of the three participants, Amina’s goal setting appears to lie outside the realms of society but elements of her self-efficacy appear to be sufficient to carry her through to achieving PhD status.

A study by Goby and Erogul (2013), which looked into female entrepreneurship in the United Arab Emirates, noted several initiatives formulated by the government to assist females in the workplace such as The UAE National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2002), and the Dubai Women’s Business Council (2002), which is part of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce. The UAE National Strategy for the Advancement of Women has as its patron Her Highness Shaikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women’s Union (GWU), Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation (FDF) and President of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood. She re-launched the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in 2015 for the next 6 years to 2021. The aim of this is to provide a framework for federal and local government entities along with those in the private sector and social organisations. The framework includes providing a

decent living for women as well as encouraging creativity in sustainable and developmental fields (Government,ae, 2017). The Dubai Women's Establishment, also a government initiative and established in 2006, aims to nurture the next generation of Emirati women leaders to enable them to continue the efforts of their pioneering predecessors. At the same time, these Emirati women will serve as role models to young women in the wider society with the establishment playing an active role (Government of Dubai, 2018).

Self-obliging. Work-life balance was mentioned by participants as an important obligation especially where their family was concerned. It appears to be mandatory for females pursuing a career, to fulfil the role of being available for other family members. This was illustrated in Salma's comment in relation to undertaking further study, "And of course it is my duty to keep the balance between my work and my family", and in Amina's previous comment, ". . . if I do the study abroad the challenge will be double as I'm quite tied to the family." As such, it is difficult to distinguish whether the obligation was self-imposed or was imposed by family or society, both of which are the wider communities to which the participants belong. Regardless, obligation to the family was clearly present.

In contrast however, Dana saw further commitment to study as possibly causing her to have to, 'give up so much of her social life and leisure life in general' but admitted that if she wanted to focus on her career, ". . . my lifestyle would be dedicated to studying and working hard." The fact that Dana lived abroad for study for 2 years sharing a flat with Western students has undoubtedly granted her this somewhat alternate perspective in relation to obligation and pursuit of career goals, although not necessarily at the neglect of family.

As was to be expected, other obligations fell more directly under career goals. For instance, Sumaya was adamant that the next position she looked for, ". . . has to be related to HR because I studied so I want to apply what I studied in my work," and was in direct contrast to her taking up previous positions which she referred to as "just getting something." Dana's decision to quit her engineering course abroad, return home, and switch to the business field, was explained through her reflection, "I knew if I did engineering I just wouldn't be happy...I was just more interested in the business subjects." The fact that she had found parts of the engineering course tough led her to this conclusion. She appeared to have gone from strength to strength, with an awareness of what is expected for success in the private sector in her comment, "...I'm still pursuing further education...it's a very important part for you to succeed...if you have a lower level education they won't much consider you...even though you're good at the job." Her expectations in relation to success in her

future career path hinged on her getting more experience to perhaps open a family business, becoming more financially independent to explore other avenues, and growing as a person.

Fatma perhaps came across as the participant having the strongest philosophy of life in general in relation to her expectations. This was demonstrated in the extract, “I believe our life is a learning cycle that will never end so the more you learn, the more responsibilities, the more opportunities they can offer you.” She was under no illusion as to the fact, “there is always room for improvement,” a statement she clarified later when she said she planned to look for a more challenging job in the future as, “. . . there is no growth if you keep doing what you’re doing right now.” Fatma was also very aware of her obligation to be there for those workers who are more junior to herself in the workplace having known and felt what it was like to have no one in the past.

Discussion

Responses to this initial study assisted in building a picture of a career path in the private sector through the eyes of local, female graduates. Specifically, the picture revealed characteristics inclusive of influences and challenges and took into account proximal environmental influences (Lent & Brown, 1996) such as barriers and supports, during choice-making, learning experiences, goal setting and its effect on performance success and individual beliefs, values, and decisions that ultimately affect success. This represented the relatively unknown world of private sector employment for females in Dubai through constructs of the SCCT.

As seen in the previous section, the dominant themes resulting from the analysis were those of achievements, impacts and expectations. Such themes, as predicted by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 249) afford, “a rich, coherent and meaningful picture of dominant patterns in the data”, that specifically addresses the research question: “From the perspectives of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, what are the most important factors that constitute a career path?” Pivotal to the analysis was the SCCT and whether the dominant patterns were representative of the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting in this Middle-Eastern context, as these patterns drove the questions to be used in the quantitative study that followed. As such, the objective of the study was to examine the SCCT’s range of applicability.

As pointed out by Lent and Brown (2006), special measurement challenges are present when attempting to test hypotheses derived from the social cognitive theory (SCT), a forerunner to the SCCT, as it is concerned with domain-specific aspects of human functioning. Measures of social cognitive research need to be tailored to the specific domain

and dependent variables of interest, are dynamic in nature, and give a glimpse of how people are able to change, develop and regulate their own behaviour (Lent, 2005). The following data, based on SCCT constructs, gave such a glimpse into participant careers to date.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy as one of the measures of the SCCT is defined as, “a set of self-beliefs that are linked to performance domains and activities” (Lent, 2005, p.104), and can be conceptualised and measured as content or task-specific self-efficacy and coping self-efficacy. As the terms suggest, content self-efficacy relates to the belief of being able to perform tasks within a specific domain and coping self-efficacy to the belief of being able to overcome domain-specific obstacles. Choice goals and persistence in relation to successful performance may be seen as a result of both these forms of self-efficacy and were present in the collected data. We saw direct evidence of the belief of being able to perform workplace duties in the career gaining code extracts under the *achievement* theme and evidence of the belief of being able to overcome career-related obstacles in the ‘career challenging’ code extracts of the same theme.

A specific example of a successful experience which seemed to raise self-efficacy was Salma reporting on those in her new work place, acknowledging, “Oh she’s good, she’s good”, and the subsequent happiness and pride this brought her. However, this can be seen as a somewhat delayed self-efficacy as she realised how good she was only after she had moved to a new company. The move was deliberate in an endeavour to test the waters of a new career field and has encouraged her to now go on to study a master’s related to the new field. So far as coping self-efficacy was concerned, Salma mentioned the reality of having less time with the family during her intended study, but was confident that they would understand, and emphasised a duty to keep the balance between her work and her family. These extracts also exemplified how Salma exercised personal agency in her quest for success in her career, a highlight of the SCCT (Lent, Brown & Hackett in Brown, 2002).

Further examples of task-specific self-efficacy were present in the data collected from Dana, who cited her potential, as acknowledged by managers, as “giving her some sort of personal encouragement to pursue and work harder for what she wants”, and Fatma, who admitted that the recognition she received from her colleagues, senior manager, and the Chairman boosted the quality of her work. Both participants acknowledged challenges, ranging from extra work required leading to stress and de-motivation, to self-pressure in the form of there always being room for improvement. Later, however, Dana moved towards an opposite form of self-efficacy, with her comment relating to her managers wanting her to stay in her position, as “benefitting them alone” and resulting in her feeling “put down”. In

contrast, Fatma was somewhat defensive of the constant need to improve, lamenting, “Life is a learning cycle that will never end and the more you learn...the more opportunities they can offer you now.”

Process self-efficacy, including making career decisions and managing work/life roles, and self-regulatory efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2006), related to motivation for self-enhancing behaviours, are other forms of self-efficacy and were also present in the research findings. The latter, self-regulatory efficacy, has features of process and coping efficacy. As illustrated in the previous paragraph, Salma was very conscious of her role in managing a work/life balance when she re-commenced study to complete a Master’s in Quality. Fatma also alluded to the challenge of balancing work and life, describing it as, “a huge challenge to balance between my study, my personal life and my work,” and also expressed self-pride at having been successful. Shortly afterwards, she brought self-regulatory efficacy into play by stating that in future, “I may look for a more challenging job ... because sometimes you need to test yourself to know where did you reach.” Although both these examples illustrated overt action, self-efficacy may also include control over, “one’s own motivation, thought processes, performance level, emotional states, or changing environmental conditions,” (Bandura as cited in Lent & Brown, 2006, p.25). This was previously referred to in the broader term as personal agency that can be exercised through cognitive, affective or explicitly behavioural means.

Outcome expectations. Outcome expectations are concerned with the consequences of performing particular behaviours (Lent, 2005) and types such as anticipated social, material and self-evaluative have been identified by Bandura (as cited in Lent & Brown, 2006). Expectations can be positive, negative or neutral in nature, defying the assumption that people will only engage in behaviours with positive outcomes and avoid those with negative outcomes. In fact, Lent and Brown (2006) recommended examining negative outcome expectations in an endeavour to better understand why people might avoid particular career options. As can be seen in responses to this study, many of the positive expectations were accompanied by those predicted to be somewhat problematic. For example, Salma, Fatma and Dana all made reference to the sacrifices including the need to balance work and family life or work and social life required to further progress their careers. Amina went one step further by explaining her drive to embark on a PhD as a single female in terms of needing to leave the security of the family and subsequently being judged by society as being ‘different’ because of this. Career progress, as acknowledged by Fatma, also came at a cost of hard work and the continual need to “challenge yourself”.

More obvious outcome expectations were relayed by Sumaya in her assumption of now being able to pick up a good position in HR, having successfully completed her major in this field. Her expectations extended to her physically moving location and basically starting over in new work and living environments. Dana emphasised the importance of continuing with extra study if her desire to move into a different field for experience and to eventually open up her own business was to be realised. Amina's expectation of getting a Dean's position after completing her PhD was again preceded by knowledge of the hard work needed to accomplish such a feat. In summary, the outcome expectations mentioned above can be seen to fit those belief types related to extrinsic reinforcement whereby tangible rewards are received for successful performance (Lent, Brown & Hackett as cited in Brown, 2002).

Another type of belief about response outcomes relates to self-directed consequences, and self-pride for mastering a challenging task is an example of this type. Both Fatma and Amina alluded to the pride they felt at successfully completing their studies while simultaneously holding down full-time positions. In these instances, and in other instances tagged by Salma and Sumaya, this pride extended to family pride and further to societal pride in relation to successful females within the society. Dana, in particular, saw the success of females as being "a very good thing". Another important feature insofar as society was concerned was the expectation expressed by Fatma of giving back to the society in the form of assisting others as they worked their way up the career ladder. Amina also saw her plan to gain a PhD in the future as giving encouragement to the rest of society to pursue similar feats.

As acknowledged by Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002, p. 263), "...outcome expectations are acquired through learning experiences similar to those that inform self-efficacy and are probably also influenced by self-efficacy when outcomes are determined by the quality of one's performance". The link and sometimes overlap in these two constructs was exemplified in this and the previous section.

Goal setting. According to the SCCT, goals can relate to either choice-content or performance and can be defined as the intention to engage in a particular activity or to produce a particular outcome (Bandura as cited in Lent & Brown, 2006). Choice-content goals refer to the type of activity domain wishing to be pursued, and performance goals to the quality of performance wishing to be attained within a given domain. In this study, both choice-content goals and performance goals were represented. The types of activity domains chosen by participants related to insurance and banking, along with further educational studies in Human Resources (HR) and Business. Once in those domains, specific performance goals could be identified.

In all instances, the choice made by participants of major relevance to this study was their initial decision to work in the private sector in Dubai. Most of these early career choices reflected their majors. For example, Fatma, is an Information Technology (IT) graduate, working in a bank where technology skills were needed to complete major projects. Amina, also joined a bank to utilise her newly-acquired finance and accounting skills. Sumaya, having recently completed a Bachelor in HR, offered an insight into her newly-focused goal of, “. . . looking for a change . . . but it has to be related to HR . . . to apply what I studied.” She stressed this again later, contrasting her changed attitude with that of when she first started work where her goal was, “. . . just to get a good job with a good salary without seeing where I wanted to reach.” Salma also clearly identified a new direction for herself in that she was now planning on pursuing a degree in quality to enhance that in HR as she believed, “. . . there will be a lot of demand for quality.” Fatma planned on opting out of her current position in the public sector and returning once more to the private sector to, “. . . something more challenging where you can see your achievement.”

Quality of performance in relation to career enhancement appeared to be uppermost in all participants' minds, in that all have pursued studies to enhance the quality of performance over the years, with some intending to further this experience by pursuing additional studies in the near future. Extracts that illustrated these intentions included those from Salma who clearly equated additional study to appraisal and promotion in her remark, “. . . I want to see my final appraisal . . . and discuss it with my manager and the possibility of promotion,” and from Dana who stated, “If I want to focus on my career, my lifestyle would be dedicated to studying and hard work.” Amina's determination to pursue a PhD to enable her to take up a Dean's position suggested that improved quality of performance obtained through additional study enhances the likelihood of career enhancement.

As can be seen by the extracts above, the recognition that the SCCT suggests “a complex interplay among goals, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations in the self-regulation of behaviour” holds true (Bandura as cited in Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002, p. 263). Self-efficacy and outcome expectations linked to selected goals which in turn influenced self-efficacy and outcome expectations development.

Interests, contextual support and barriers. As the SCCT assumes that people will be drawn to their field of interest, no further measures were put in place in this study to capture anything other than participants' general occupation sector. However, data gathered during the interviews revealed that all five participants had changed direction in relation to their career path. With the exception of one participant who worked in insurance, all others

had been or were currently employed in the banking sector. Proximal contextual variables in the form of environmental supports and barriers are considerations of the SCCT and are exemplified primarily in the impacts and achievements themes of this study. Key influences on participant career paths to this point in time were family, managers and, to a lesser extent, friends.

Influence of data on study 2. Analysis of participant responses in Study 1 drove the design of the quantitative study measures. By and large, the SCCT appeared to be a good fit for this region, but it was recognised that certain features of available surveys for the on-line quantitative study would need to be adapted to better capture the essence of participant perceptions of their careers in this Middle-Eastern environment. Starting points were to consider the proximal and distal effects that significant others, role models and other support agencies have had and to consider personal volition in the drive towards success.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY 2

The overall aim of Study 2 was to test the components of the SCCT (Lent, 2005) in a Middle-Eastern context in relation to career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai. As a follow-up to the initial qualitative study—Study 1—and in keeping with the parameters of quantitative research identified by O’Dwyer and Bernauer (2014), the interest of the second study hinged around describing the behaviours and examining the subsequent relationships of a larger group of individuals. Because of the intended number of participants, a quantitative method was deemed more appropriate. As such, the research methods can be seen to be complementary in nature and are sometimes referred to as a mixed methods design. High quality mixed method studies dictate that the researcher either becomes an expert of both qualitative and quantitative methods, or works in cooperation with others possessing the necessary complementary skills (O’Dwyer & Bernauer 2014).

The over-riding research question was: *From the perspectives of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, what are the most important factors that constitute a career path?*

Questions to be addressed in arriving at these factors included:

- What role do individual beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting) play in shaping career decisions?
- What aspects of the environment assist and inhibit career-making decisions?
- What other life roles affect career decisions?

Method

The aim of the study was to further explore participants’ perceptions of a career path in the private sector in Dubai—in other words, to generate data in order to further address the research questions partially addressed in Study 1 and referred to in the introduction of this chapter.

The online questionnaire explored the three elements of the SCCT (Lent, 2005), those of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting, through selected pre-existing questions extracted from various scales and sub-scales. As well as items used from ready-made tests, the final set in Study 2 comprised items developed by the researcher as a direct result of Study 1 responses, specifically those related to future goal setting.

Participants. Of the 41 participants, 4.9% held a master’s degree, 68.3% a bachelor’s degree, 12.2% a diploma and 14.7% other or unspecified. Over half of the participants (53.7%) were currently studying with 63.4% being of single status, 26.8%

married and 9.7% divorced. Just over 80% (80.3%) of participants had no children—4.9% had one child and two children respectively and a further 9.8% had more than three children. Participant ages ranged from 20 to 40—48% were in the 20-25 bracket, 22% in the 26-30 bracket, 9.8% were in the 31- 34 bracket, and 19.5% were aged between 35 and 40. Sector-wise, 77.9% worked in either the private or semi-private sectors—36.5% in the private and 41.4% in the semi-private with 21.9% belonging to the public sector. Industry-wise, 39% worked in banking and finance, the health, media and retail industries were composed of 4.8% of participants and 46.4% worked in other, unspecified industries. The majority of participants (39%) had worked in their current organisation for more than 4 years with 29.3% having worked for 2 to 3 years, 17.1% for 1 to 2 years and 14.6% for less than 1 year in their current organisation. See Table 5.1.

As with Study 1, the research was conducted with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Southern Queensland (See Appendix 1 for copies of the approval letters). The Director of Dubai Women's College approved distribution of the study to Alumni members via the college Industry Liaison Officer.

Measures. Study 2 was cross-sectional and conducted through an on-line survey comprising 43 items in total, using the following measures: six items from the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (OSSES; Rigotti et al., 2008), nine items from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2006), eleven items from the revised Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale (VOES; McWhirter & Metheny, 2009), twelve items from the Sources of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations Scale (SSEOE; Lent et al., 2017) and a final five items (researcher-generated from results of Study 1) related to goal-setting.

Table 5.1

Study 2 Participant Demographics (N=41)

Demographic	Value	%
Degree	Masters	4.9
	Bachelor	68.3
	Diploma	12.2
	Other	14.7
Study Status	Yes	53.7
	No	46.3
Age	20-25	48.8
	26-30	22
	31-34	9.8
	35-40	19.5
Marital Status	Single	63.4
	Married	26.8
	Divorced	9.7
No. of Children	0	80.5
	1	4.9
	2	4.9
	>3	9.8
Sector	Private	36.5
	Semi-private	41.4
	Public	21.9
Industry	Bank & Fin.	39
	Health	4.8
	Media	4.8
	Retail	4.8
	Other	46.4
Time in organisation	<1 year	14.6
	1 – 2 years	17.1
	2 – 3 years	29.3
	>4 years	39

Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale. Occupational self-efficacy was measured using the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (OSES, Rigotti et al., 2008). There were six items on this scale which was about participant beliefs in their ability to manage various challenges in their job. An example of an item in this section related to self-efficacy was, “I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities.” Participants rated each of the six items on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). The scale was scored as an average, all items were summed and then divided by the total number of items. Reliability coefficients for the OSES were between .85

and .90 over the five countries in which the scale was tested (Rigotti et al., 2008). The internal consistency of the items in the present sample was Cronbach $\alpha = .78$.

Utrecht's Work Engagement Scale – 9. The second section comprised nine items taken from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006) which sought to explore participant feelings in relation to the work place and overall work engagement. They were asked to rate themselves on a 6-Point Likert scale from 1 (*Never*) to 6 (*Daily*). The scale was scored as an average, all items were summed and then divided by the total number of items. High scores translated into high occupational engagement. An example of an item in this section was, “I am immersed in my work.” The original Cronbach’s alpha for the scale varied between .85 and .92 across ten countries (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The internal consistency of the items in the present sample was Cronbach $\alpha = .96$ for the full-scale (i.e., nine items). For the subscales, the internal consistency coefficients were Cronbach $\alpha = .94$ for Vigour, $\alpha = .89$ for Dedication, and $\alpha = .87$ for Absorption.

Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale – revised. The Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale (McWhirter & Metheny, 2009) comprising 11 items sought to elicit information from participants about outcome expectations regarding career planning. Due to an administrative error, item number 12 from the original scale was missing. Although these items were based on those used in a study for high school students, they were deemed relevant by the Supervisor and Candidate given the circumstances of participants in this study. That is, few studies have been done on female graduates in the region in relation to future career plans. In addition, questions needed to be kept as simple as possible to have the best chance of an accurate translation into Arabic.

A Likert 4-point scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*) was used. The scale was scored as an average, all items were summed and then divided by the total number of items. High scores meant high level outcomes were expected in relation to an occupation. Taken into consideration was the need to accurately replicate those areas of outcome expectations covered in Study 1—social, materialistic and self-approval via the items. Examples of an item was, “I will have a career/occupation that is respected in our society.” The original Cronbach’s alpha score for the scale was .93 (McWhirter & Metheny, 2009). The internal consistency of the items in the present sample was Cronbach $\alpha = .90$.

Sources of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations Scale. The Sources of Self-efficacy and Outcome Expectations scale (Lent et al., 2017) comprised a total of 12 items that sought to expand on the key components of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in relation to career exploration and decision making. Personal mastery experiences, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning as sources contributing to self-efficacy were the focus of the section. Participants were asked to rate themselves on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (*Strong Disagreement*) to 5 (*Strong Agreement*). The scale was scored as an average, all items were summed and then divided by the total number of items. Participants were asked to reflect on their past experiences, including the influence of important others and role models, and how these may influence future career decisions. High scores indicated a healthy self-efficacy and high outcome expectations. An example of an item was, “I have been resourceful at gathering the information I need to make career-related decisions.” Original Cronbach’s alpha values suggested the sub-scales internal consistency reliability estimates of $\alpha = .82$ (personal mastery), $\alpha = .89$ (verbal persuasion) and vicarious learning $\alpha = .83$ (Lent et al., 2017). The internal consistency of the items in the present sample was Cronbach $\alpha = .85$ for Personal Mastery, $\alpha = .93$ for Verbal Persuasion, and $\alpha = .89$ for Vicarious Learning. The full scale returned a Cronbach α of .92.

Coding themes from study 1 – goal setting. The final section of the on-line survey contained five items relating to future career goals and emanated from Study 1 in-depth interviews. Participants were asked to rate their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) regarding items related to education, promotion, changing organisations and careers, and opening their own business. The scale was scored as an average, all items were summed and then divided by the total number of items. High scores indicated the intention to embark on future goals as listed above. Cronbach’s alpha for measure of goals was $\alpha = .55$. See Table 5.2 for goal setting items.

Table 5.2

Goal Setting Items – Study 2

Instructions: The following questions ask you to think about your future goals. Please rate your agreement on the 5-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. My future goals are related to further education.
 2. My future goals are related to getting a promotion.
 3. My future goals are related to changing organisations.
 4. My future goals are related to changing careers.
 5. My future goals are related to opening my own business.
-

Note: Scale choices were 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).

Procedure. Participants completed an online survey available on the CreateSurvey platform. All questions, together with the Participant Information Sheet, were translated into Arabic by a professional translator. A colleague, fluent in Arabic, then checked the final draft for accuracy and understanding prior to it being uploaded. See Appendix L for question translations. The Participant Information Sheets for Study 2 were embedded in the online survey as the first page with a default consent to proceed feature in-built. They were sent out to participants via email the first week of August 2017. Although the survey was prepared and ready for distribution early June, distribution was deferred to August due to the holy month of Ramadan, which began in late May, followed by Eid El Fitr an important Islamic holiday celebration. The researcher's annual leave also occurred in July. July is traditionally when many employees take leave to escape almost unbearable heat conditions across the region.

The college whose database I used played a gatekeeper role. During initial contact with the College Director, it was decided that access to the database should be via the Industry Liaison Officer. This was as much for ethical reasons as it was to ensure the best possible response rate since those on the database had already built up a certain rapport with the Liaison Officer. At all times, progress on the data collection was reported directly to the College Director via the Liaison Officer to ensure strict ethical procedures were followed. The fact the Liaison Officer was an Arabic speaker, and an Emirati meant she was also able to field any questions that arose from potential participants.

Initially an email was drafted in English and then sent to the Industry Liaison Officer at Dubai Women's College to translate into Arabic. The purpose of the study was explained as was the fact that the surveys were in both English and Arabic with participants having a choice of the language they were to use to complete the survey. A link to the survey was placed in the email with notification coming to the researcher's private email address when a survey had been completed. Regular checks were made on the online survey to see response rate. The survey comprised 43 questions. Reminder emails/messages were sent every four weeks in an endeavour to prompt and encourage participants to complete the questionnaire within the allocated time frame. In general there was a noticeable increase in response rates immediately after direct approach to students and also after the reminder emails were sent with six to seven new responses each time but these ultimately fell short of the required number.

Participants for Study 2 were predominantly graduates from the private sector in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. However, graduates from the semi-private were also targeted to reach the required number of participants for the study. Sources for the recruitment of participants included databases comprising Alumni members from Dubai Women's College as well as employers with a connection to the college through work placement, an apprenticeship program for all graduates. Evening students working in the private and semi-private sectors in Dubai were also encouraged to participate and to nominate other potential participants. Students deemed appropriate were those recognised as having a good understanding of English. As a result, the snowball technique produced work colleagues as well as acquaintances of the graduates such as relatives. In total, 1000 potential participants were contacted via the on-line questionnaire designed on the CreateSurvey platform (www.createsurvey.com) using a subscription service. Of the 1000 participants contacted, 41 responded by completing the questionnaire within the 6-month window.

The online data collection warranted attention with respect to maintaining privacy and confidentiality during the collection process. Internet malfunctions and human error during data transmission and storage that can interfere with confidentiality and anonymity were thankfully not present. Data were not encrypted on the create survey platform because the topic of my study was deemed low risk. Precautions were taken to ensure the collected data for all studies were stored on a password protected computer that in turn was kept in a locked cupboard for safe-keeping. Directly after the deadline had passed for completion of the survey, the survey was locked and the data were downloaded and stored on the password protected computer. It was also backed up on an external hard drive, again for safe keeping,

and the drive stored in a locked cabinet. For ease and convenience in relation to future analysis, all data were downloaded from the SPSS program (IBM, 2017) into Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office Professional Plus, 2013, version 15.0.5067.1000). Both these programs assisted in the analysis of the collected data and the subsequent results were reported accordingly. Details for tables pertaining to data results were extracted by copying and pasting directly from excel into the relevant table in the final word document. This ensued greater accuracy when transferring statistical information.

Plan for data analysis. As indicated by O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014), descriptive analyses allow data to be summarised and described by revealing patterns not evident in the raw data and facilitates understanding of the data for the researcher and interested parties prior to analysis. They further purport that statistical techniques in particular assist in making sense of the data linked to the research questions. In this research, the statistical software of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences v.25 (IBM, 2017) and Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2013, version 15.0.5067.1000) were used in the data analyses. Data were analysed using frequency distributions, visual representations, and measures of central tendency and dispersion. Correlations gauged the statistical significance of relationships among the study variables. Prior to these analyses being undertaken however, data were cleaned and screened.

Results.

Data screening. Real world data can be incomplete with missing attributes and attribute values, inconsistent so far as coding, naming conventions and values are concerned, and contain errors, outliers and inaccurate values (Skuzza, 2013). Data were screened at the univariate, bivariate and multivariate levels. After the initial screening, the data were cleaned and then variables were prepared for analysis.

Missing data. The nature of the Create Survey (2017) tool allowed parameters to be set prior to the on-line survey being undertaken. One of these parameters was making the completion of all questions mandatory in a section before participants could move to the next section. As such there was no missing data from the 41 participants.

Skewness and kurtosis. In screening to ascertain whether the data for each key variable were normally distributed on each of the scales, the following was noted. Using the assumption that in a perfectly normal distribution of a data set the mean, median and mode are all equal (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) the following observations were made in relation to the results. Table 5.3 presents the coefficients for skewness and kurtosis. All variables represented by scales—OSES UWES, VOES, SSEOE and its sub-scales and the UWES and

its sub-scales—were slightly negatively or non-normally skewed. A negative skewed distribution is where the mean < median < mode and scores are generally bunched at the upper end of the score range. As such the mean is pulled toward the negative tail (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). A negative kurtosis value is indicative of a distribution with lighter tails and a flatter peak. As can be seen in Table 5.3 the negative values are applicable to the VOES and the SSEOE sub-scales as relates to skewness but the UWES subscales display positive kurtoses in line with that of the UWES scale.

Outliers. Outliers are scores that deviate substantially from the mainstream score (mean) and can influence the strength and direction of a relationship leading to incorrect analysis results. This is particularly so when there is a small sample size (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014; Scuzza, 2013; Wetcher-Hendricks, 2014). The issue then becomes what to do with the outliers in a data set without influencing the overall analysis in a detrimental way. Inspection of box plots revealed just one case with relatively lower scores on two measures, Occupational Self-Efficacy and Vocational Outcome Expectations. There were no other cases with extreme scores on multiple variables. That single case was retained in the analyses.

Descriptive statistics. Table 5.3 Descriptive Statistics represents summaries in relation to each of the four scales, the OSES, UWES, VOES and SSEOE, and the subscales of the UWES and SSEOE. The most common central tendencies statistics, the mean (refer to previous section on frequency distributions) and median were used in this study in an endeavour to judge the quality of the data collected. As identified by O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014), measures of dispersion are needed to describe the variability in a raw score distribution. Measures of dispersion applied in this study also included the range and the standard deviation. The scale with the widest range of responses was the UWES (R=1.78-7.11, SD=1.47) and subsequently its subscales—vigour (R=1.00-7.00, SD=1.56), dedication (R= 1.67-7.67, SD=1.48) and absorption (R= .00-7.33, SD=.55). Unsurprisingly, the VOES on a Likert scales of four, showed the smallest range of responses (R=2.55-4.00, SD=0.43).

Table 5.3

Descriptive Statistics for the Measures

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew	<i>SE</i>	Kurtosis	<i>SE</i>
OSES	4.22	4.33	0.55	-0.83	.369	1.38	.724
UWES	5.69	6.33	1.47	-1.26	.369	0.63	.724
VOES	3.55	3.63	0.43	-0.81	.369	-0.20	.724
SSEOE	4.15	4.17	0.65	-0.43	.369	-0.59	.724
SSEOE - PM	4.19	4.25	0.63	-0.30	.369	-0.29	.724
SSEOE - VP	4.12	4.25	0.87	-0.77	.369	-0.44	.724
SSEOE - VL	4.13	4.25	0.81	-0.75	.369	-0.02	.724
UWES - Vigour	5.49	6.00	1.56	-1.11	.369	0.54	.724
UWES- Dedication	5.80	6.33	1.48	-1.26	.369	0.71	.724
UWES- Absorption	5.80	6.33	1.55	-1.40	.369	1.54	.724

Note. N = 41. OSES = Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale; UWES = Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; VOES = Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale; SSEOE = Sources of Self Efficacy and Outcome Expectations. PM = Personal Mastery, VP = Verbal Persuasion, VL = Vicarious Learning. Results of Cronbach's alpha on each of the scales were: OSES - ($\alpha = .78$); UWES - ($\alpha = .96$); VOES - ($\alpha = .90$); SSEOE - ($\alpha = .92$). UWES (Vigour) = ($\alpha = .94$), Dedication = ($\alpha = .89$), Absorption = ($\alpha = .87$). SSEOE (Personal Mastery) = ($\alpha = .85$), Verbal Persuasion = ($\alpha = .93$), Vicarious Learning = ($\alpha = .89$).

Power analysis. Post-hoc G*power analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009) was run to determine the actual power achieved in the two regression models in Study 2. Results of the post-hoc G*power test that was run to detect an effect on the basis of the sample size and predictors for the OSES (dependent variable) and predictors from the SSEOE scale of vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and personal mastery showed there was high power (0.96) at the moderate effect size level of 0.15 (Faul et al., 2009). Results of the post-hoc G*power test in the regression relating to the UWES (dependent variable) and predictors of the VOES and the OSES scales showed there was power of (0.73) at the moderate effect size level of 0.15 (Faul et al., 2009).

Correlation analysis. Correlation coefficients identify the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables with values between -1 and +1 and can be positive, negative, or zero. Positive correlation coefficients represent an increase in both variables, whereas negative correlation coefficients reflect an increase in one variable, but a decrease in the other. Zero denotes weak or non-existent relationships between the scores on two measures (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

The Pearson product-moment coefficient quantifies the linear relationship between the two continuous variables of strength and direction but does not show causation (Prion & Haerling, 2014). These values were assigned when interpreting Pearson r results: 0 to 0.20 is negligible, 0.21 to 0.35 is weak, 0.36 to 0.67 is moderate, 0.68 to 0.90 is strong, and 0.91 to 1.00 is considered very strong (Shavelson, 1996; Taylor, 1990). Results of the Pearson correlations are found in the following paragraphs and in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Inter-correlations Among the Full Scales and Sub-Scales of Measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.OSES	—									
2.UWES	0.24	—								
3.VOES	.61**	.42**	—							
4.SSEOE	.50**	.46**	.77**	—						
5. PM	.54**	.52**	.78**	.85**	—					
6.VP	.43**	0.14	.59**	.82**	.55**	—				
7.VL	.32*	.46**	.59**	.85**	.69**	.48**	—			
8.V	0.27	.97**	.41**	.38*	.50**	0.10	.40**	—		
9.D	0.22	.97**	.49**	.43**	.53**	0.15	.47**	.92**	—	
10.A	0.21	.95**	.33*	.42**	.48**	0.16	.46**	.87**	.88**	—

Note. Full scales are shown followed by subscales. Full-scales: OSES = Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale; UWES = Utrecht's Work Engagement Scale; VOES = Vocational Expectations and Outcomes Scale; SSEOE = Sources of Self Efficacy and Outcome Expectations. Subscales of SSEOE: PM = Personal Mastery; VP = Verbal Persuasion; VL = Vicarious Learning. Subscales of UWES: V = Vigour; D = Dedication; A = Absorption. Two tailed significance * = .05, ** = .01.

Table 5.5

Correlation of Goals with Career Measures

	OSES	UWES	VOES	SSEOE	PM	VP	VL	V	D	A
Further education	.03	.13	.21	-.01	.12	-.04	-.06	.15	.18	.06
Getting a promotion	.24	-.03	.13	.06	.08	.22	-.17	-.03	.00	-.05
Changing organisations	.16	-.21	.15	.05	.13	.01	.00	-.22	-.24	-.15
Changing careers.	.20	-.23	.10	.05	.09	.11	-.09	-.20	-.29	-.18
Opening my own business	.35*	-.08	.16	.31	.18	.41**	.16	-.12	-.04	-.07

Note. OSES = Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale; UWES = Utrecht's Work Engagement Scale; VOES = Vocational Expectations and Outcomes Scale; SSEOE = Sources of Self Efficacy and Outcome Expectations. PM = Personal Mastery; VP = Verbal Persuasion; VL = Vicarious Learning. V = Vigour; D = Dedication; A = Absorption. Two tailed significance * = .05, ** = .01.

Table 5.5 represents the goal of opening a business in relation to the OSES and the SSEOE and its subscales. As would be expected, there was a moderately strong correlation between the OSES and opening a business. However, the only SSEOE subscale that correlated with doing so was VP (verbal persuasion).

Regression analysis. Correlational design in research amounts to simultaneous measurement of numerous variables none of which are manipulated (Field, 2009). More specifically and as defined by Gallo (2015), regression analysis is a method of identifying those variables that have an impact on the outcome variables. Variables crucial to the study and their interaction with each other, as well as their role in influencing the outcome variables are identified through regression analysis. Variables are further identified as independent and dependent, with the former being hypothesised to lead to changes in other variables in the study, and the latter hypothesised to change as a reaction to changes in the independent variable (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). In this instance, various aspects of behaviour relating to careers were measured at the same point in time to ascertain the relationships amongst these aspects.

Before performing multiple regression analysis on a data set, there are several assumptions that need to be fulfilled (Laerd Statistics, 2018). Listed below and subsequently addressed are these assumptions the fulfilment of which allowed the multiple regression to

proceed. According to Creswell (2015), 30 is the minimum number of participants for an analysis based on the normal distribution to be valid. The sample size of 41 allowed parametric techniques to be used in the data analysis. Of greater importance is the fact that the Likert scales used throughout the study are categorised as ordinal thereby making the use of parametric techniques legitimate.

Dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable for the first regression was the Occupation Self-Efficacy Scale (OSES). The independent variables were taken from Sources of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations Scale (SSEOE) and comprised vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and personal mastery. In the second regression the dependent variable was the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The independent variables were the Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale (VOES) and the OSES. In both regressions, the two independent variables met the assumption criteria of two or more independent continuous variables (Laerd Statistics, 2018).

Independence of residuals. The Durbin-Watson statistic that tests for autocorrelation in the errors of a regression model was run with the following results. According to Karadimitriou and Marshall (n.d.) if there is no autocorrelation (where subsequent observations are related), the Durbin-Watson statistic should be between 1.5 and 2.5. Both models were within the acceptable limits. The OSES and subscales showed a result of 2.049 and the UWES and VOES and OSES combined returned a result of 2.076.

Collinearity diagnostics. Prior to progressing to the more advanced analysis techniques such as multiple regression, it was essential to run a collinearity test to ensure the independent variables—SSEOS personal mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning, and the OSES and VOES—were not extensively correlated. Multicollinearity, as identified by Laerd Statistics (2018) and Pallant (2016), is not tolerated by multiple regression as it can result in difficulties understanding the contribution of independent variables to the variance in the dependent variable. The Pearson correlation coefficient matrix of the independent variables showed all scales and subscales were within the parameters of non-existent multicollinearity where correlations were $>-.7$ and $<.7$, tolerance values were $>.1$ and variable inflation factor (VIF) values were <5 (Laerd Statistics, 2017; Pallant, 2016). See Table 5.6.

Table 5.6

Collinearity Diagnostics for Independent Variables

	SSEOE - PM	SSEOE - VP	SSEOE - VL	OSES	VOES
Tolerance	.472	.690	.513	.633	.633
VIF	2.118	1.448	1.951	1.580	1.580

Note: OSES = Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale; UWES = Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; VOES = Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale; SSEOE = Sources of Self Efficacy and Outcome Expectations; PM = Personal Mastery, VP = Verbal Persuasion, VL = Vicarious Learning. Values for Tolerance = $>.1$ and for VIF = <5 .

Occupational self-efficacy. The OSES (Rigotti et al., 2008) was the dependent variable and is a scale whose items measured employee perceptions of their reactions or responses to certain situations in the work environment. The predictors were three sources of self-efficacy extracted from the SSEOE (Lent et al., 2017) and these were vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and personal mastery. In general, items representing the SSEOE key components of self-efficacy and outcome expectations were examined in relation to career exploration and decision making. Specifically, the regression analysis investigated the relationships amongst items representing self-efficacy and the three sources of vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and personal mastery, and the forms of those relationships. With OSES as the criterion variable, the model is significant $R = .577$, $R^2 = 0.333$, $SE = .463$, $F(3) = 6.151$, $p = .002$, $SS = 3.961$, $MS = 1.320$. This model indicated relationships existed amongst the variables.

The values of the multiple correlation coefficient between the predictors and the outcome, that is subscale items and the OSES items, were shown to be ($R = 0.577$). In this table, R^2 showed how much of the variability in the outcome (OSES) was accounted for by the predictors of vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and personal mastery. In this instance the predictors accounted for 33.3% ($R^2 = 0.333$) of the variability in the OSES. So far as how well the model generalised, ideally the values of R^2 and adjusted R^2 should be similar (Field, 2009). In this instance, the value was 0.054 or 5.4% ($0.333-0.279$). This effectively means if a model was derived from the population rather than a sample it would account for approximately 5.4% less variance in the outcome (Field, 2009). Finally, the standard error of estimate, a measure of the accuracy of the predictions made by a regression, was observed as .463.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) tested the significance of the difference (variance) between the means of two or more groups (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Inferences could then be made about the population means. In this instance, it tested the significance of the difference in means of the OSES and the SSEOE and its sub-scales. The F-ratios that were close to 1 were an indication of no difference between the group means. However values greater or less than 1 signified observed differences between the group means were unlikely if the null hypothesis was true. That is there was no variance in group means in the population. The value of $F = 6.151$ indicated more variability in group means than you would expect to see by chance and negated the null hypothesis. At .002 significance the risk of concluding that a difference exists between group means when there is none, is just 0.2%.

As cited by Field (2009), the multiple regression model is in the form of an equation whereby each predictor is represented by a coefficient (b). Estimates for these b values are shown in the first part of the table. These estimates show the individual contribution of each predictor to the model. In this instance, the b value tells us the relationship between the OSES (Rigotti et al., 2008) and each predictor—personal mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning from the SSEOE (Lent et al., 2017). Because the b values were positive for two of the predictors—personal mastery and verbal persuasion—this showed both had a positive association with the OSES (Rigotti et al., 2008). Personal mastery and verbal persuasion can be said to have positively affected occupational self-efficacy. Specifically, personal mastery had the largest impact on the model with a standardised beta value of 0.535 compared to 0.211 for verbal persuasion. That is, personal mastery was a significant predictor of self-efficacy. However the reverse was true for vicarious learning with no association with the OSES (Rigotti et al., 2008) being apparent. That is, vicarious learning had little effect on occupational self-efficacy. The b value additionally indicates the degree to which each predictor affects an outcome if the effects of other predictors are held constant (Field, 2009). Finally, the personal mastery predictor at .009 ($p < .05$) made a significant contribution to the OSES model. See Table 5.7 for a summary of the standardised weightings for each predictor.

Table 5.7

Coefficients for OSES and SSEOE Variables

<i>Coefficients</i>					
<i>Model</i>	<i>Standardised Coefficients</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Correlations</i>	<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>	
	<i>Beta</i>		<i>Part **</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
1 (Constant)		.000			
SSEOE-personal mastery	.535	.009***		.472	2.118
SSEOE-verbal persuasion	.211	.199		.690	1.448
SSEOE-vicarious learning	-.152	.423		.513	1.951

a. Dependent Variable: Occupational Self Efficacy Scale

Note: ** Square of the coefficient correlation part indicates the percentage of the unique contribution of each individual variable to the total R square. *** Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Work engagement. Next, work engagement was submitted to multiple regression as the criterion variable. The model was significant, $R = .425$, $R^2 = .180$, $SE = 1.366$, $F(2) = 4.182$, $p = .023$, $SS = 15.610$, $MS = 7.805$. The R^2 result was a measure of how much of the variability in the outcome was attributed to the predictors. In this model, the VOES and the OSES accounted for 18% of the variance in the UWES. The Adjusted R^2 column informed of how well the model generalised and in this case the value was 0.043 or 4.3% (0.180-0.137) meaning that if the model was derived from a population and not a sample, it would account for approximately 4.3% less variance in the outcome (Field, 2009). Finally, the standard error of estimate was noted as 1.366. In this study, the sample size of 41 should be kept in mind regarding statistical significance.

The nature of the ANOVA is to test the significance of the difference (variance) between the means of two or more groups (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). In this instance, it tested the significance of the difference in means of the UWES and the VOES and the OSES. The F -ratio of 4.182 indicates more variability in group means than one would expect to see

by chance— F -ratios close to 1 indicate no difference between group means. At $p = .023$ significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) the risk of concluding that a difference existed between group means when there was none, was just 2.3%. Please note that these results may be deemed statistically insignificant due to the sample size of 41.

In multiple regression the model describes the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. See Table 5.8 for a summary of the standardised weightings for each predictor. The first part of Table 5.8 gives us estimates for these *beta* values and these values indicate the individual contribution of each predictor to the model. The *beta* value in this instance, told us the relationship between the UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2006) and each predictor—the OSES (Rigotti et al., 2008) and the VOES (McWhirter & Metheny, 2009). Because the *b* value for the OSES was negative, this indicated a negative or little association with the UWES. In other words, high occupational self-efficacy did not necessarily lead to an increase in work engagement. However the reverse was true for the VOES (.023, $p < .05$) with a strong, positive association with the UWES apparent. As outcome expectations increased, so too did engagement with work. Specifically, the VOES had the largest impact on the model with a standardised beta value of 0.437 compared to -0.021 for the OSES. The *b* value once again indicated the degree to which each predictor affected an outcome if the effects of other predictors were held constant (Field, 2009).

Table 5.8

Coefficients for UWES and OSES and VOES Variables

<i>Coefficients</i>				
<i>Model</i>	<i>Standard. Coefficients</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Correlations</i>	<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>
	<i>Beta</i>		<i>Part **</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>
1 (Constant)		.765		<i>VIF</i>
Occupational Self Efficacy Scale	-.021	.908		1.580
Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale	.437	.023***		1.580

a. Dependent Variable: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

Note: ** Square of the coefficient correlation part indicates the percentage of the unique contribution of each individual variable to the total R square. *** Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Discussion

In Study 2 and according to the SCCT, it was assumed that self-efficacy would be a major predictor of outcome expectations and goal setting. Specifically, self-efficacy was examined through the lenses of the OSES and its subscales, the UWES and its subscales, the VOES and the SSEOE to see what it might look like in the realms of everyday working lives of Emirati graduates in the private sector. Study 1 had already revealed that the SCCT model appeared to be applicable to the Middle-Eastern environment but because of the limited number of interviews conducted, this information could not be further generalised. It was also decided that proximal and distal effects of significant others, role models and other support agencies would be considered together with personal volition of participants in Study 2. This was primarily to gain a greater depth of understanding of what a career path might look like in the domain-specific environment of the private sector. The path focused on self-efficacy and its sources of personal mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning, work engagement in relation to vigour, dedication and absorption, and outcome expectations and goal setting.

Self-efficacy. In Study 2, both task-specific self-efficacy and coping self-efficacy were tested in the first section of the on-line survey through chosen items from the OSES and in the fourth section through items chosen from the SSEOE and its subscales of personal mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning. Lent and Brown (2013) define task-specific self-efficacy as the self-belief of being able to fulfil the requirements of certain tasks whether they be work-related or academically-related for example. Coping efficacy is represented by the self-belief of being able to overcome obstacles in the environment in which they are presented (Lent & Brown 2013). Self-confidence in being able to effectively problem solve in the workplace, utilising past experiences to assist in preparation for a career future and meeting occupational goals were items that assisted in gauging the level of participant vocational confidence for the OSES. The analysis of data generated from items on, from first of all the OSES scale, showed the mean score to be 4.22 ($SD = 0.55$) which suggested that overall, participants perceived themselves as confident in relation to solving problems, using past experiences to assist their career and meeting goals in the workplace.

All participants scored relatively and equivalently highly on the measures of the sources of self-efficacy, with mean scores higher than 4 out of the possible total 5. This finding suggested that they perceived themselves as having done well at gathering information in order to make career decisions and then at subsequently putting those decisions into action. The influence of important others and role models was reflective of the societal culture of where the study took place. This culture places great importance on family values and opinions all firmly set within the boundaries of Islam. This influence was in keeping with what Lent and Brown (2013) refer to as the “S” part of the SCCT whereby people are perceived as living in a social world with continuous opportunities to be influenced by others.

Outcome expectations. The Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale items which were represented in the third section of the on-line survey were self-evaluative, socially-acceptable and materialistic in nature. Bandura (1986) drew attention to these three types of perceived consequences of a particular action with self-evaluative being likened to self-approval, socially-acceptable being beneficial to family and materialistic being financially oriented. Attention was also drawn to the relationship between self-efficacy and outcome expectations in that an assumption of the social cognitive theory is that when people believe they have the necessary capabilities to perform certain behaviours, by default they also believe their efforts will lead to more desirable consequences. Self-efficacy plays a role in assisting people to action beliefs and to persist in the face of adversity (Lent & Brown, 2013). Use of talents and skills, control over career decisions and future happiness were also measured by items in this section.

Results indicated a mean score of considerably higher than three out of four. This would suggest that on the whole, participants anticipated positive future outcomes in relation to their careers. This was in keeping with the relatively high self-confidence perceptions reported in the previous section. As indicated, it was assumed that those working in the private sector when compared to those working in the public sector would be more self-confident. By default they would possess higher outcome expectations in relation to their career as the majority of graduates approach the private sector in the UAE with trepidation.

Work engagement. Kim, Park and Kwon (2017) identified the UWES-9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) as being the most commonly used scale to measure work engagement with vigour, dedication and absorption being its three components. Analyses of results can therefore be on the total and subscale levels. In addition and as acknowledged by Kim, Park and Kwon (2017) the scale has been used in many international studies with translations being effectively undertaken. As such, the UWES-9 was used to clarify the extent of participant feelings, both physical and mental, in relation to their work environment and appeared in the second section of the survey. Responses were classified into subscales of vigour, dedication and absorption. As with self-efficacy, the participants' mean scores for work engagement, and sub-scales were high and near the maximum possible score 6.

Studies that have been done using Hofstede's compass in relation to national cultures have shown a positive relationship between group cohesiveness and group members' level of engagement (Kim, Park & Kwon, 2017). When using Hofstede's country comparison chart (Hofstede Insights, 2019), the United Arab Emirates is identified as a collectivist society that manifests itself in the form of people belonging to "groups" with loyalty paramount. This could therefore be an explanation as to why participants rated high for all components of work engagement—vigour, dedication and absorption.

Goal setting. The final section of the on-line survey sought to clarify participant plans in relation to future goals related to their career. Specifically these were choice-content goals that refer to the type of activity domain wishing to be pursued (Bandura as cited in Lent & Brown, 2006). Given the fact that over 68% of participants had already attained at least a bachelor's degree and a further 5% a master's degree and there were approximately 54% studying at the time of the survey, it was not surprising that few were planning further study. In addition, it is generally perceived that private sector organisations in the UAE are much more reluctant to release employees for further study during working hours than are their public sector counterparts. We could also attribute the lack of interest in further study to the fact that 10% of participants had more than three children. It was presumed that further study would add to time away from their family.

The desire to open a business in the future may well have negated the desire to get a promotion and change both organisations and careers. Lent and Brown (2013) acknowledge that actions that are goal directed are more likely to succeed in terms of reaching the outcomes sought by the goal setter. Goals that are compatible with personal

values and proximal to action are also more likely to succeed. In this instance, participants may already be operating a small business while continuing to work full-time as the work provides financial security until such times as the business is independently sustainable. In the researcher's experience, mandatory college courses such as Innovation and Entrepreneurship which is directly linked to the design thinking course from Stanford University, are often conducive to graduate business start-ups during and after the course.

Correlations among the factors. The goal of opening a business in the future correlated with the OSES ($r = .35$). It takes a certain amount of self-confidence to believe in the possibility of going into business in the future. This could be due to the popularity of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) run by women in the United Arab Emirates in recent years. In an article published in *Women Entrepreneurs* in September 2018, it was pointed out that women now make up 70% of the region's graduates and that there has been a surge in female entrepreneur support groups and an increase in funding for new businesses (Hopkins, 2018). Female support groups have always been prevalent in the United Arab Emirates as cited by Goby and Erogul (2011) in their study on female entrepreneurs.

Many establishments have been set up by the Government and other associated organisations specifically to support women in their careers. Events such as International Women's Day are celebrated in style with much attention and publicity given through media outlets and in particular on social media. These are all sources exemplifying and possibly explaining why verbal persuasion featured prominently in participant responses.

All other goals related to undertaking further education, getting a work promotion, changing organisations and ultimately changing careers did not correlate strongly with the OSES. This could possibly be explained as discussed through a focus on opening a business in effect negating the importance of further education, promotions and changes in employers and careers. With regard to a seemingly lack of interest in further education, this could be explained by the fact that 73.3% of participants had already achieved at least a bachelor's degree and that there were 53.7% currently studying.

Further examination of the subscales of the SSEOE revealed that only verbal persuasion correlated with business goals ($r = .41$). Vicarious learning ($r = .16$) and personal mastery ($r = .18$) had little influence on adding to the future goal of opening a business. This suggested that participants were reliant on or sought encouragement from others whether in a family or work environment in relation to opening a business. These results also suggested that there was an absence of important others and role models

through which to glean knowledge regarding new business opportunities. Austin and Nauta (2016) examined entrepreneurial role model exposure and self-efficacy as predictors of women's entrepreneurial intentions but found that the correlation between role-model exposure and self-efficacy was not stronger when there was greater access to female entrepreneurs. Although the study was done with college students in a Western environment, the results may explain the relative non-dependence on important others and role models when opening up a business found in this study.

The minority of Emiratis working in the private sector in the past has partially resulted from a perception of locals being inadequately equipped—work ethics came into play here—to work amongst the predominantly ex-patriot workforce that makes up the private sector. As a result, Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) in their study done on the private sector in the UAE suggested a reduction in self-efficacy because of pressure to work in the private sector may occur in Emiratis working in this sector. The perspective of personal agency as identified by Bandura (as cited in Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012) could have had a negative effect on participant beliefs in their ability to open a business. Personal agency has been equated with personal mastery in this instance.

To further explore the expected results of Study 2 in more depth and to better understand the unexpected results such as why vigour, dedication and absorption is not related to participant self-efficacy, and from where does the verbal persuasion emanate, Study 3 followed. It is important to understand why these constructs are not in correlation. An understanding could ultimately lead to a revised model of the SCCT that is better suited to the Middle Eastern context.

It is also pertinent to return to the over-riding research question of: *From the perspectives of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai, what are the most important factors that constitute a career path?*

Questions to be addressed in arriving at these factors include:

- What role do individual beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting) play in shaping career decisions?
- What aspects of the environment assist and inhibit career-making decisions?
- What other life roles affect career decisions?

Regression. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship in the first instance between self-efficacy and various potential predictors. The OSES (dependent variable) and predictors from the SSEOE scale showed that a combination of vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and personal mastery explained 33% of the variance in the OSES. There would however be many other predictors that could explain the variance in the OSES scores that are not included in this model. Examples of these predictors or sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations specific to the workplace environment could be career interventions within the workplace such as training and development, mentoring and coaching to name but a few. Physiological responses, both positive and negative, to situations could also be measured.

The second regression, the UWES (dependent variable) and predictors of the VOES and the OSES had an R^2 value of .180. Again, it was expected that there would be other important variables contributing to changes in the UWES not covered by the two scales representing the independent variables. For example, managerial attitude and additional study commitments as nominated by participants in the interviews that followed this study were seen to greatly affect engagement in the workplace. Other possible considerations are that dedication and engagement are essential attributes in any workplace environment and are therefore not consciously linked to self-efficacy. In addition, it should be noted that because human behaviour is generally difficult to predict, studies dealing with behaviour, usually have R^2 values of less than 50% (Frost, 2019). Other limitations of the study include both the sample size ($N=41$) and the population from which the sample was drawn which was a minority of educated females representing a limited number of industries in the private sector in Dubai. As such, generalising the results to the general population of interest should be done with caution.

The final study in this research, Study 3, was another qualitative study comprising six face-to-face interviews. The purpose of Study 3 was to extend the findings of Study 2 to explore potential explanations for those results of the on-line survey that were somewhat unexpected.

CHAPTER 6: STUDY 3

Study 3 was primarily a result of needing to gather more detailed information regarding the results of Studies 1 and 2 both of which were based on the SCCT (Lent, 2005). Study 1 comprised in-depth interviews with six participants to gather information relating to their perceptions of their careers to date. Questions pertained to the three inter-related concepts of Lent's (2005) theory—self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting. Data were analysed under codes and themes emanating from participant responses to the three concepts. Study 2, an on-line quantitative study, further explored the three concepts of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, 2005)—self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting—in work environments in the Middle East, specifically Dubai. The 41 participants were once again female Emirati graduates working in the private sector in industries such as banking and finance and information technology. Selected questions from pre-existing tests such as A Short Version of the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (Rigotti, Schyns & Mohr, 2008), Utrecht's Work Engagement Scale-9 Version (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006), the Vocational Outcome Expectations-Revised (McWhirter & Metheny, 2009), the Sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations for career exploration and decision-making test (Lent, Ireland, Penn, Morris, & Sappington, 2017) were used. The final set of questions was assembled directly from participant responses to Study 1 and revolved around future goals in relation to further education, promotion, changing organisations and careers and opening their own businesses.

The need for Study 3 was also as a result of some unexpected findings from Study 2. An example of this can be seen in responses to the questions from the Occupational Self Efficacy Scale (OSSES) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) sections where there was little correlation between the two scales and their subscales. In essence, participants' sense of confidence (efficacy) did not relate to their engagement in their profession. Another unexpected finding was revealed in the sources of self-efficacy where only verbal persuasion on the Sources of Self Efficacy and Outcome Expectations Scale (SSEOE) correlated with business goals ($r = .406$). There was no significant correlation between mastery ($r = .178$), or vicarious ($r = .158$) learning and business goals. Additional examples demanding the need for Study 3 will be explained in the Results section. For a summary of the three studies and their stages and components see Appendix M—Exploratory Sequential Design for Mixed Methods.

Method

As identified by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 9), a qualitative sensibility refers to “an orientation towards research in terms of research questions and analysing data that fits within the qualitative paradigm”. They identify some of the orientations making up the qualitative sensibility as having an interest in process and meaning, a critical and questioning approach to life and knowledge, and the ability to recognise your cultural membership. You need to also be able to distance yourself from that including putting aside your own assumptions. Other attributes that lend themselves to qualitative sensibility include the abilities to simultaneously listen and analyse, to critically reflect on your own researcher role, and to develop rapport and trust with participants. As a researcher, I identified these attributes as being those needed when carrying out Study 3 of this research.

In keeping with the qualitative sensibility attributes, Study 3 sought to seek clarification of some expected responses of the quantitative Study 2 as well as flesh out more detailed explanations of unexpected responses through the subsequent interviews. As such, questions were based on the three elements of Lent’s (2005) SCCT—self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting—and sought to extract and match detailed explanations of responses to the over-riding research question of a career path in the private sector in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. The sub-questions to facilitate better detail were:

- What role do individual beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting) play in shaping career decisions?
- What aspects of the environment assist and inhibit career-making decisions?
- What other life roles affect career decisions?

Through responses and the subsequent analysis of the interviews that made up Study 3, participants were considered to be constructing their own realities of what a career path looked like in the private sector in Dubai. The constructivism approach to research aligns itself with the production of meaning by people. Along with contextualism, which relies heavily on meaning being related to the context in which it has been produced, it has guided the choice of research design and conduct of Study 3.

Research Design

Both philosophical and theoretical perspectives whether they be tacit or overt, greatly influence a researcher’s approach to research (LeCompte & Preissle as cited in Kawulich, 2009). LeCompte and Preissle (as cited in Kawulich, 2009) explain that detailed attention to the effect of the theory during the design and implementation process will improve research

design in all areas including applicability and generalisability, credibility and validity and precision and reliability. To re-cap, in this study, a theory in the form of Lent's (2005) SCCT was used to see whether it was applicable in a Middle Eastern context. Depending on the findings, there was an option to further develop that theory.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), as advocated by Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002), Lent (2005, 2013), Lent and Brown (2013), investigates how individuals' beliefs affect career choice. Seen to be developmental in nature, these beliefs as they perfect, ultimately lead to ability linked to success. The SCCT is based on Bandura's (as cited in Lent, 2013) Social Cognitive Theory and hinges around the complexities of people, their behaviour and the environments in which they operate. It espouses that these three elements—people, behaviour and environment—are entwined and influence each another. In the model, the variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting are thought to be responsible for regulating career behaviour and are considered to be closely related. It is these three variables that are the basis of Study 3 interview questions. Interviews as part of a qualitative research design, are particularly suited to research wishing to explore understanding and perception of an experience-based phenomena as was the case with career paths in the private sector in Dubai.

Researcher-as-Instrument statement – reflexivity. Reflexivity is particularly applicable to qualitative studies and is “the act of reflecting on your own perspectives and values during data collection, analysis and interpretation” (O’Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014, p. 11). Being in a culture other than my own, that is in an Islamic country rather than a secularised country, heightened my awareness of the need to constantly step back and question the analysis of data collected during and after the interviews. Reflexivity applies to all stages of the qualitative study; the interview itself, the de-briefing with participants afterwards and listening to the tape and transcription afterwards. Because I had prior knowledge of participants, I needed to be very careful not to ask leading questions in an effort to extract further information if a response was deemed incomplete. For example, when Dana spoke of not being encouraged to extend herself in her workplace, I instinctively wanted to encourage her to think about how she may overcome this barrier as I knew she was so much more capable of succeeding at greater challenges than what she was currently being offered in her workplace. To do so however would have been off topic and a subjective response.

I was also very aware of how certain responses of participants fitted in with what I knew of them, professionally and personally. For example, Marwa spoke of work colleagues

seeing her in a managerial position in the future and it was easy to see from what I observed during contact with her during class time how this assumption could be made. Another example was Amira describing herself through others' eyes as always seeing through what she started. My observations of Amira would concur with this. The interview notes taken immediately after each interview also afforded a clearer picture of any biases that may be present when came time to analyse the data.

On the other hand, it could be argued that this prior knowledge enabled me to choose those participants that closely fitted the profile of those needed for Study 3. For example, those whose English I knew to be at a standard high enough to understand the concepts of the study were chosen. Arabic was the first language of all six participants. I had also worked with four of the six participants in the fifteen week college course Career Planning and Development so they had a basic understanding of the SCCT and the variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting. They had also been shown in class, a presentation on my research so had a fair understanding of where the SCCT fit in relation to other career theories.

In a similar fashion to Study 1, notes were made in a journal immediately after each interview regarding that particular participant. These were both factual and impressionistic; factual so far as the demographic side of things went and impressionistic in so much as I noted down anything I thought would assist in the analysis of the data. An example from Amira's notes, "She comes across as very much knowing her own mind. Her determination will no doubt lead her to where she wants to be" served to reinforce responses she had given throughout the interview in regard to her future ambitions.

In addition to the journal kept during the interviews, I also regularly sent my supervisors work for editing so that they could directly identify any information from the interviews that needed more clarification or justification. The interviews were transcribed within a week of them taking place in an endeavour to capture the overall impression of the authenticity of the interview responses. This was done through multiple playing of the recordings and multiple readings of the transcriptions as well as a reflection of the atmosphere in the room at the time of the interview.

With regards to the data analysis and reflexivity employed during this analysis, my principal supervisor and assistant supervisor were crucial in ensuring my analysis techniques stayed on track and appeared to be true to the original transcripts in relation to questions and responses. Both were that one step removed from the environment in which I had spent the last 18.5 years so were able to clearly identify any bias that may have been applied to for

example, analysis. At each stage, I informed the supervisors via email and zoom sessions of how the analysis was proceeding and took on board any adjustments suggested for both the analysis and write-up. For example, the principal supervisor referred me to specific readings to ensure that information was placed in the correct section of the write-up. As such I was referred to Morrow's (2005) article on "Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Psychology" which gave specific guidelines as to how amongst other things, to apply reflexivity in the best possible way given my previous interaction with all six participants. In summary, the practice of bracketing, identified by Morrow (2005) as making your own assumptions and biases open to yourself and others, was strictly applied throughout the entire research process.

Participants. Study 3 included six participants. Two of the six participants worked full-time as well as studied in the evenings at a Federal Government institution in the United Arab Emirates and were in the process of completing their 4-year bachelor degrees. Of the remaining four, one worked part-time and studied in the evening, two worked full-time with one studying at an external organisation and the other worked full-time but had completed her studies 6 months previously. All six participants were known to the researcher. Four of them were either current or former students and two were work colleagues.

As was the case in Study 1, participants were chosen from a diverse range of career backgrounds. Two were in the human resources field with one in the airline industry and the other in the manufacturing industry. Three were in the finance and banking fields and one was in the IT field. Ages of participants ranged from 22 to 32 years with an average age of 26 years. All with the exception of one were single and none had children. All participants were in non-managerial positions at the time of the interviews.

Strategies. In a similar fashion to Study 1, both purposive and convenience sampling can be said to have occurred. As described by Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2015), judgement or purposive sampling affords a deliberate choice of participants by the researcher and is reliant on participant qualities. Convenience sampling on the other hand is tagged by Etikan et al., (2015) as being such that participants are readily available. Both sampling types were considered appropriate for my study since the research question specifically revolved around female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai. At the time of the study the students I worked with or had formerly worked with fitted all criteria demanded of the research. The same applied to the two work colleagues.

Recruitment. In this research, participants were chosen because of their English language ability and because of the environment in which they worked, that is the private

sector in Dubai. Participants were initially approached with the aim of gauging whether they would be interested in participating in the study. Their potential contribution of meaningful information to the study in its entirety, both experience and an interest in research in general, were also taken into consideration here. Because I had prior knowledge of participant levels from an academic perspective, I was able to confidently predict the quality of information that would be forthcoming in the interviews. These predictions proved accurate in all six instances with participants drawing on experience and knowledge for all sections of the interviews. All participants were sent a PIS and subsequently signed Consent Forms as they had done in Study 1.

Researcher roles and relationships. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) identify that researchers can assume both insider and outsider roles in a study. Outsider roles can range from a detached to a participant observer, insider roles can range from participants as both observers and participants (Cohen et al., 2008). My roles as a researcher in Study 3 were very similar to those in Study 1 because of the nature of the second qualitative study. I was once again a “detached observer” on the one hand, but an “attached observer” on the other. The attachment side can be seen to come in both physical and mental forms in that I was physically attached to the environment in which the interviews took place—a place that subsequently became the participants’ workplace in the evenings due to their academic commitments—and also mentally attached since this was my place of work. My inside knowledge of the participants also contributed to the attachment label.

Sources of data – interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) believe that interviews are suited to experience-type research questions. They also have a place when researchers are looking to explore understanding and perception and construction-type research questions. As such, the fact that participants had a personal stake in the topic rendered them more likely to generate rich, detailed information during the course of the interviews.

Study 2 influences. As explained, questions for the qualitative Study 3 emanated from the data collected in Study 2. Analysis of the data revealed both expected and unexpected results. Study 3 questions then sought to verify and expand on both types of results. For example as expected, the Sources of Self Efficacy and Outcome Expectations Scale (SSEOE) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and their subscales correlated. However, the Occupational Self Efficacy Scale (OSES) did not correlate with UWES or subscales meaning that participants’ sense of confidence (as identified as self-efficacy) was not related to their engagement in their profession.

An example of a Study 3 question from the SSEOE and UWES section was: Overall, how satisfied are you with the decisions you have made regarding your career? A further example, this time from the OSES and the UWES section was: How do you think your confidence in your ability to achieve well in your current job affects your overall engagement with your work and vice versa? For all questions asked in Study 3 interviews, refer to Appendix N.

Interview procedure. As was the case in Study 1, participants were initially approached on an informal basis to ascertain whether they would be interested in participating in the final leg of the research study. The study was explained to them. Those participants who had taken the Career Planning and Development course or were currently taking it were familiar with the SCCT components of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and self-efficacy. Those who were not familiar were briefed on them prior to the interviews. All participants had the previous studies explained to them and understood that their contribution would assist in filling the gaps or abnormalities that had been found in Study 2. All were sent the questions along with the PIS and consent forms and were encouraged to ask questions for clarification purposes prior to the interviews.

In a similar fashion to Study 1, interviews with six participants this time were spread over a period of four weeks with venues chosen dictated by the participants themselves in so far as four of them were working full-time and studying. Five of the six interviews took place in Dubai Women's College (participants' study venue) in a private room and one took place in a restaurant outside the college. Interview notes were taken immediately after each interview. These were a mix of demographic facts for future reference and of observational notes that were deemed to be useful for future analysis. For example, to see whether responses were in keeping with what I knew of the participant. An example of these notes include:

22 year old single female, high school graduate almost ready to graduate with a Bachelor in Business Administration – Human Resources. She has worked for 3 years 2 months in her current organisation. Ex-student who is a natural in the HR area—committed and motivated. Recently chosen by the airline to go to Europe for a weekend of recruiting new staff. She embraces such opportunities and makes the most of them.

For more detailed information refer to the researcher's notes in Appendix O.

On the day of the interviews, participants handed in their consent forms either in hard copy or sent them as a PDF via email before beginning the interviews. They were again encouraged to ask for clarification throughout the proceedings and were aware the interviews were being taped for subsequent transcription. After formal questions had ended, they were also encouraged to add any other details they considered may be relevant to the research topic of career paths. They were guaranteed anonymity so far as the taping of the interviews and transcribing of these were concerned.

As was the case in Study 1, interviews were audio-taped on a laptop with an i-phone being used as a back-up and manually transcribed onto the laptop within 4 days of the interview. They were then sent to participants for checking and with an invitation to add more reflections. No one did. However participants did extend an invitation to be contacted at any time in the future should additional information be required to further enhance the study. After transcription, interviews were only kept on the password protected laptop but deleted from the i-phone for security reasons.

Interview questions. Interviews ranged from 25 to 40 minutes and all can be said to have extracted a good depth of information. As will be noted in the results section following, on the rare occasions when data offered needed more elaboration, this was done by following-up with a question that usually asked for an example. Examples called upon the participant to justify responses through reflection and reassessment, sometimes resulting in much more detail and clarity when compared to the original response. Questions were sectioned with each section explained through a rubric prior to the questions being posed. This was to assist participants in positioning their responses in relation to their overall contribution to their perception of a career path.

Table 6.1

Study 3 Item Sets

Set 1: Demographics

- 8 open-ended and closed items (researcher developed) related to educational and marital status, age, number of children, sector, industry and time in current organisation

Set 2: THE OSES did not correlate with UWES or its subscales – their sense of confidence (as efficacy) was not related to their engagement in their profession.

- 6 items (a mix of closed on a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended) related to self-efficacy and the current job – adapted from items in the OSES

Set 3: THE OSES did not correlate with UWES or its subscales - their sense of confidence (as efficacy) was not related to their engagement in their profession.

- 6 items (a mix of closed on a 6-point Likert scale and open-ended) related to enthusiasm in the workplace

Set 4: THE OSES did not correlate with UWES or its subscales - their sense of confidence (as efficacy) was not related to their engagement in their profession.

- 4 open-ended items (researcher developed) to see how their self-efficacy directly relates to their work engagement

Set 5: Of the sources of S-E, only SSEOE *verbal persuasion* correlates with business goals ($r = .406$) Personal mastery ($r = .178$) and vicarious learning ($r = .158$) do not. Why?

- 10 items (a mix of closed on a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended) related to past experiences influence on future careers

Set 6: Self-efficacy and goal setting

- 4 open-ended items (researcher developed) to explore how sources of self-efficacy relate to goal setting
-

There were 20 questions in total. The first section of questions hinged around self-efficacy in relation to their current job, the second set around engagement in the workplace, the third set around the relationship between self-efficacy and engagement and the final set around past experiences related to future career goals. Included in the final section were specific questions related to the influence of important others on participant careers. An example of the rubric for section one of the interview which was read out prior to the questions was:

“I’d like to find out more about your sense of self-efficacy in relation to your current job. Self-efficacy is the belief you have in your ability to achieve in different areas of your life. We will focus on your current job. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being not very confident to 5 being very confident”.

For a complete range of questions asked during the interview refer to Table 6.1 Item Sets.

Data analysis. O’Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) point out that some sort of coding or narrative or a combination of both methods are the usual processes used for analysis in a

qualitative study. Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson and Suarez-Orozco (2018, p. 40) elaborate on this point by stating that “qualitative meta-analysis involves the interpretation aggregation of thematic findings rather than reanalysis of primary data.” Meta-analyses also allows the researcher to consider contradictions within or across studies (Levitt et al., 2018). These were important points to keep in mind given the contrast in how data were analysed for Study 2 which was quantitative in nature.

The first step in the analysis procedure of the data collected from the interviews for Study 3, part of data management, consisted of compiling a table into which information such as participant, question section and questions and responses were inserted one by one. Transcriptions emanating from repeated listening of the taped interviews were read multiple times in order to identify responses to specific questions and then responses copied and pasted into the word table opposite the relevant question in the Word document. This served the purpose of becoming ever more familiar with the contents of the interviews, and proved a huge help later in the process when it was time to gather together all responses for reporting of patterns and abnormalities. Relevant examples were highlighted in the table together with corresponding responses to questions. See Appendix P for examples.

A narrative technique was used to report the findings of the analysis. Similar findings for each question were lumped together in the form of summary-like comments representing participant responses for each question so that understanding and patterns could be more easily recognised. Definitive numbers were given as an introduction to the analysis for each question, or in some cases question set, in order to see emerging patterns in the data collected. An example of this can be seen in the following analysis by the researcher of responses to the first question relating to self-efficacy given to participants in the interview.

The first question asked in relation to self-efficacy and their current job revolved around their perception of their level of confidence in performing their current job at the level expected by their manager. The majority of participants, that is five out of six, scored themselves four on a scale of five.

The rest of the analysis for that particular question comprised a rating for the remaining participant with examples of why she had scored herself in this way. There was also justification in the form of specific examples for why each of the other five participants had rated themselves as they had. An example of this is seen in the following extract where the participant had rated herself a four out of a possible five:

Amira spoke of the fact that, “in every stage and every job role, I have learnt certain requirements and how to do the job better so right now I’m really confident to

do the job with full responsibility that the bank or that my line manager is really expecting.”

This became the pattern for the data analysis as each question set was worked through methodically. Comparisons and contrasts were elements of the technique to ensure all data were incorporated into the analysis. This is similar to what Morrow (2005) suggests as being a very important part of data analysis and is a technique that assists researchers to be more mindful of simple interpretation of the data at the expense of trustworthiness and rigour. At regular intervals, the analysis was sent through to my principal supervisor and my secondary supervisor for review and feedback. The majority of comments from the supervisors referred to the need for more clarification in some spots such as this comment relating to a result from the previous Study 2 and upon which Study 3 was based.

Did you correlate OSES with all of the subscales? Is this r the correlation with the full scale score of the UWES? If you tested correlations between OSES and all of the UWES subscales, then you might need to include those here or just remove “and its subscales”.

Comments such as these enabled me to see the implications of not fully understanding a concept, in this case a statistical result, thereby challenging me to further investigate and eliminate any such contradictions. The presentation of data that at times seemed very clear to the researcher, was not necessarily as clear to the readers.

Data management From the beginning of the research, a Dropbox account was set up to ensure data would be backed up in at least one other location. Each time the research was worked on, it was backed up on Dropbox regardless of how minor the work was. From time to time, data were also backed up on an external hard to minimise loss should a network go down. The single most useful tool used in the analysis of the data from Study 3 was the table set up to quickly match the question to the corresponding response. This together with the transcriptions of all interviews and the interview notes taken immediately after each interview, the analytic journal, ensured I had access to all needed materials at any time.

In addition, the spreadsheet resulting from Study 2 that clearly showed the results of the on-line quantitative study, more specifically the correlations or non-correlations between each of the variables, was available in the folder on my desktop for quick access. It was imperative to work closely with the information in this spreadsheet in order to be able to identify both similarities and discrepancies in results from Study 2. These similarities and discrepancies were further investigated as part of Study 3. As such, Study 3 became an exercise in switching back and forth between the results and subsequent analysis of Study 2

and those of Study 3. All in all, the various techniques employed throughout the analysis process resulted in what Morrow (2005, p.256) refers to as “a deep understanding of all that comprises the data corpus and how its parts interrelate.”

Results

Because of the somewhat unexpected results of Study 2, further information was gathered in Study 3 comprising interviews with six participants. A summary of the key areas from which questions were drawn are listed below.

Self-efficacy. Study 2 found that participants’ senses of self-efficacy, although positive, had a relatively weak correlation with their engagement in their profession. Evidence of this was reflected in results showing the OSES (Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale) as having a non-significant correlation with the UWES (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9) and its subscales of $r = .244$. Specifically, the results of the UWES subscales showed $r = .269$ in relation to vigour towards work, $r = .224$ for dedication to work and $r = .210$ for absorption at work.

Work-place engagement. In relation to self-efficacy, as illustrated through self-confidence and engagement in their profession, Study 2 results revealed that there was little or no correlation between the two elements as depicted in the OSES and UWES and their subscales. In trying to discover the possible reasons for this, direct questions regarding work place engagement were explored in the second parts of the interviews. Participants rated themselves on a scale of one to six with one being never enthusiastic to six being always enthusiastic to come to work, carry out their responsibilities and in general dedicate themselves to the tasks at hand. Questions for this section came from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 Version (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006).

Self-efficacy and work engagement. With regards to the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement, a series of questions were asked covering confidence and overall work engagement, enthusiasm, commitment to tasks, and dedication to work in general. Responses from participants ranged from strong to weak relationships amongst the various categories. Specifically in relation to self-efficacy and work engagement, the majority of participants clearly linked confidence to their work engagement, justifying their statements with examples as they went.

Future career decisions related to past experiences. The next section of questions served to explore in more detail past experiences of participants in relation to decisions made with their future careers in mind. Questions were taken from the *Sources of self-efficacy and*

outcome expectations for career exploration and decision-making test (Lent, Ireland, Penn, Morris & Sappington, 2017). Types of decisions included those concerning career direction, and choice of major and college to attend. Participants were once again asked to rate themselves on a scale of one to five in relation to these aspects. In addition, the influence of important others and role models was considered in an endeavour to gain a clearer picture of major reasons behind future career paths of participants. Surprisingly, the majority of participants admitted to having no current role model with the remaining participant explaining that hers was a general role model rather than anyone specific. Previous managers however were revealed as being models that had the most significant influence on participants in the past.

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. The aim in the final section of Study 3 was to find the relationship between self-efficacy and goal setting. As such, a series of questions probing future career goals in relation to further education, promotions in the work place, changing organisations and opening own businesses were asked. These questions were tailor-made to suit the context of the study. According to the SCCT (Lent, 2005) there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and goal setting—the stronger the self-efficacy, the more challenging the goals set will be.

The six case students that follow assist the reader in building up a profile of participants in relation to their careers, past, present and future.

The case of Amira.

Self-efficacy - performance in the workplace. The first question asked in relation to self-efficacy and their current job revolved around participants' perception of their level of confidence in performing their current job at the level expected by their manager. Amira presented as being very confident of her ability to perform well in her current position. She spoke of the fact that, "In every stage and every job role, I have learnt certain requirements and how to do the job better so right now I'm really confident to do the job with full responsibility that the bank or that my line manager is really expecting." She also spoke of having her own target, portfolio and team with discussions at monthly meetings reflecting growth.

Problem-solving ability. Amira saw herself as being an effective problem solver equating her problems with having to deal with humans in the form of Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) as this was the nature of her position. She also had to deal with customers who came to her not through customer service but through portfolio management. She admitted to getting assistance from others and clearly stated, "So always I go back to the risk

(department), take their opinion and I will immediately consult maybe my colleague in case it was like a complicated case.” She further explained her *modus operandi* by claiming, “I would stay away from my manager because always it’s better especially in the banking industry to take a second opinion of a person who works or handling (*sic*) similar to my portfolio.”

Goal-meeting ability. The final section in relation to self-efficacy comprised questions focussed on the degree of confidence participants had in meeting goals set by themselves in the workplace. In relation to this, Amira mentioned certain restrictions that stopped her achieving set goals. She cited the fact that her targeted goals fell into two categories—revenue-based and non-revenue based—with the non-revenue based goals referring to customers. It was these goals she felt more confident of achieving as exemplified in, “The non-revenue based goals of attending to customers, having a new customer list, I can do it confidently.” It was a different matter however when it came to goals set for revenue-based purposes. This is illustrated in the remark, “...goals with a target maybe the revenue for example...this year they have put revenue for me to bring additional portfolio of twenty million. Given circumstances of the current market, I’m having actual difficulties to reach that target.”

Work-place engagement - enthusiasm to go to work. Amira was very enthusiastic in her feelings towards her work place repeating three times how she “loves this bank” having worked there for 12 years. She explained how the bank was being marketed as a family bank and of how this was a reflection of how employees thought of the bank by stating, “...we are spending there almost 9.5 hours from 08:00 until 17:30 so actually seventy percent of my day is spent in my work.” She repeated her daily level of engagement by saying, “I love going to the work. Although there is certain work demand which is really high, work pressure, but still I love the people, I love the management and I love the market so...”

Commitment to tasks. Amira equated her enthusiasm for work to having a plan each morning and on her willingness to stay later to complete tasks which she explained was dependent on the work pressure at that point in time. As such she conceded that there was variation in her commitment as sometimes she left work at the end of her shift. This was exemplified in her statement, “...sometimes I remain as I need to finish some of my tasks. So committed. But it varies, if there is work pressure I would stay otherwise I would leave at 17:30.”

General dedication to work. Amira, with her unrelenting enthusiasm for her work, related her dedication directly to the success she has achieved and attributed this to the

support offered by the organisation. She quoted the immediate spot rewards from the bank that have come her way as a reason for such dedication and enthused about how appreciative she was for the recognition of her achievements.

Self-efficacy and work engagement. Amira was very definite about the link between confidence and overall engagement in her response bringing in specific examples from everyday work situations and going one step further by predicting future outcomes of this engagement. This is reflected in her reply of, “Definitely, definitely... if I’m really engaged to (*sic*) my work, if I’m confident on bringing new customers or really high profile customers plus I would really engage more into my work and in time my work will have the power and strength on my abilities and they will enlarge maybe my job requirements or job roles more and more.” She elaborated further by explaining that the bank would become more confident in her if she were able to reach her targets, giving her wider scope for judgement and that as such, recognition by the company for work well done, would then feed back into her own self-confidence. She equated exceeding expectation with high engagement when she said, “If I see my employer recognise my achievement this will add confidence in my ability to do something better and always exceed the expectation...in turn I will be highly engaged to the work.” When asked whether overall engagement fed back into self-efficacy, Amira replied, “Definitely, definitely and actually it proves that being an employee for if I see my employer recognise my achievement this will add confidence in my ability to do something better and always exceed the expectation, in turn I will be highly engaged to the work.”

Self-efficacy levels - enthusiasm for work. Once again Amira emphasised her work duties as being in the sophisticated sector and to a large degree reliant on the economic circumstances of both the city and country within which she operates. As such, she related attending to both existing and new customers as adding to her confidence and abilities and explained the variety of everyday tasks and pressures as contributing factors to the confidence and enthusiasm levels she possessed.

Commitment to work. In a continuation of a deeper probe into self-efficacy and work engagement, perception of the relationship between self-efficacy and the commitment to work tasks was the next area that participants were asked to elaborate on. Amira offered the simple explanation for the connection as being, “Yes, definitely because work commitment, if I’m really committed to my work I will achieve always all the set tasks required.” She went on to elaborate on her interpretation of commitment before linking it to self-confidence. This can be seen in her responses of, “Always I view commitment as a different thing not always to achieve the work that has been assigned ... also committed to the way that I

understand the norms of the culture even of the bank ... how I present the bank outside for a larger population.” She then endeavoured to tie together the concepts of self-confidence, commitment and engagement by stating, “I think self-confidence always helps a person to move to the second stage of life especially to have a career progression ... commitment is a great thing, engagement is a huge matter that always burdens my mind while I’m working.”

General dedication to work. While it can be argued that self-efficacy and general dedication to work may have already been addressed in the previous sections, it was thought to be a worthwhile exercise to specifically address dedication to work which may be seen as a combination of the three components of engagement, enthusiasm and commitment. Amira saw dedication as being synonymous with achievement and added value to a department. She saw self-confidence as being very important as it helped the observer give you higher tasks. She explained that in the banking sector, you needed to be recognised by the bank and this was reflected in the level of tasks given you. Presumably, it is those tasks that will enhance dedication although this was not stated outright.

Future career decisions and satisfaction related to past experiences. When asked to rate herself on how satisfied she was with career decisions up to the present, Amira responded by giving herself a full rating. She began by giving a background of study she had undertaken—a Bachelor in Finance—using this as justification for joining the banking industry. She explained how she climbed the hierarchy to the position of senior relationship manager but then questioned herself as to whether she would remain in the banking sector as she had always wanted to pursue a position as professor in a university. She reflected on working in a team with the bank with the perception of becoming a professor where work is much more independent when she said, “I’ll be handling my own courses, I’ll be handling my own students but always this is my dream job and I wish that I can do it one of these days.”

She also explained at length how her initial appointment with the bank was in the compensation department (Human Resources) about which she knew nothing, but she decided to accept the position to get a foot in the door of one of the best-known institutions in the region. As can be seen in the quotation, this turned out to be very fortuitous. “Yes I took a risk because I have joined HR although my degree is in finance but no it’s worth it and I think I made a good decision to move there.” She indicated further risk-taking by citing another time when although advised not to by colleagues, she accepted a more challenging position in the organisation and although she found it difficult to begin with, saw it as a clear signal to the department head that she was willing to take up a challenge.

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. When asked to reflect on past successes, Amira was quick to recount those obtained in the field of study; a college degree and a master's degree. In her mind, the master's degree gained with a distinction has added extra credence to how others view her. This is seen in the comment, "I think it adds value along with like it gives, it gives information about the person plus my work success."

Important others - career decisions and action. Two major influencers were nominated by Amira. Both were work colleagues. In explaining the first important other, a colleague whom she had known for 12 years, she equated his evaluation of her as being risk averse to making good decisions. Her second influence, also in the banking industry, was described by her as exhibiting a somewhat negative reaction to her wanting to get out of the banking world into the education sector. As such it can be assumed that he would not rate her that highly as can be seen in the comment, "Amira, she's taking huge time to only plan her future which is not really related to the banking industry. If she focuses on the banking industry she will do the BEST might be even a unit manager very soon." She substantiated this evidence by saying, with regards to her self-rating for actioning the decisions, "The highest because he knows that if I would put something in my mind, I would work really hard to achieve it."

Assistance with important career goals. Amira, in looking forward to the future, had a somewhat different perspective on how important others could assist her in her endeavours. She admitted to wanting to change from banking into the educational sector but intended to use her old banking contacts to organise fieldtrips to banks for her finance major students. The assumption here was that she would be placed in the business department of a federal university and specialise in finance and accounting. She also hinted at wanting to do a PhD so saw her colleagues in the banking industry as prime candidates to interview for the research part of the course. Her confidence that her manager would support her in this decision could be seen in her comment, "I've been with the bank a long time and he knows me I think very well from the work that I have given so I think he will respect my decision. And I've learnt something in banking. I can't work alone in life. I need people, I need people."

Role models - influence on important career decisions. Amira's explanation as to why she currently had no role model related back to the high position she held within the organisation. She acknowledged that earlier in her career, she would have indeed had a role model but now she is very clear with her decisions and makes them swiftly without need for consultation with a second party. She wondered out loud regarding her future with the bank

however when she said, “I like to restrict the strengths and weaknesses. What’s my strength now, what is my weakness after some time? What is the time limit in the banking dynamic? If I were to remain another 5 years I would be really tired.”

Influence on choosing academic majors and career paths. Two former college lecturers were nominated as influences as well as college colleagues. Amira was very adamant about how the two lecturers—a female lecturer in banking and a male lecturer in Human Resources—had influenced her during her college years at Dubai Women’s College. She explained that she first of all liked the female lecturer’s way of teaching and how she dealt with students and then went on to detail how she had been encouraged by the lecturer to go into banking. This is reflected in her comment, “And always she used to tell me, Amira you will succeed in the banking industry but always be a good listener at (*sic*) the first days and definitely you will shine.” She explained the male lecturer’s contribution by saying, “Whenever I had any problem with work at the early stages, I would phone him and always he would give a good solution.”

Reliance on others when making decisions. Amira, while listening to others’ advice, saw the final decision as ultimately belonging to her. She explained the process she uses by asking herself, “What do I want from the step that I’m taking?” She again nominated two former work colleagues as advice givers justifying this by saying, “It’s like good to consult outside people.”

Assistance with choosing future goals. The final question asked in this section hinged on possible assistance with achieving future goals participants expected to receive from others including role models. Amira although denying at first she would receive any type of assistance, then corrected herself by identifying the owner of Zara as an inspiration to her. She switched back and forth as to whether she could follow suit, eventually deciding she could not. This is reflected in her statement, “Zara, it was an idea of a person that would like to start his own brand at the age of 39. So I can’t say, “Well yes, he’s my role model, because I can’t start a career at the age of 39. And still he’s doing great.” The very fact she identified this as being too old to start a business indicated the act had left an impression on her.

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. Amira responded in the affirmative to furthering education, to seeking a promotion, to changing organisations and indirectly to opening her own business. She indicated she had already contacted both local and international academic institutions regarding pursuing a doctorate. She also indicated a possible change of career in relation to moving into the education sphere where she pointed out that promotion would be slow in coming because of the change in career direction.

However, her ambition for future promotion was clearly expressed in her statement, “I will target for a promotion but if I remain in the banking industry, and I work more, and I achieve my target, definitely I will demand for *[sic]* a promotion.” Although she was hesitant to be associated with running her own business, she acknowledged that she currently owns a couple of rentals so in future that could become a business per se.

The case of Sara.

Self-efficacy - performance in the workplace. Sara admitted feeling uncertain and uncomfortable in relation to her performance in the workplace hence allocating herself a rating of three from five on the scale. This was attributed to a relatively new manager who, “didn’t took (*sic*) the chance to introduce herself or to know more about us, what we are doing, what our job is, how, how do we manage the operation within the department so we don’t have that connection.” In Sara’s mind, the assumption from the manager when asking staff to do something was that she “always thinks that we don’t know how to do it.” She elaborated on this further with the comment, “It lowers your self-esteem a little bit because if your manager didn’t open up about your work or know what are you (*sic*) doing exactly, ok, you never know how she likes things to be done.”

Problem-solving ability. Sara used the fact she has been doing the same job since she joined the organisation a little over 3 years ago as justification for ranking herself full marks on the problem-solving ability scale. She summed it up by stating, “Whenever I have a problem, it’s very easy to manage it, and it’s very easy to solve it because you’ve already been through, you’ve been through it before.” Like other participants, Sara also used others’ assistance to solve problems when necessary explaining, “There are some problems that maybe would be new but it’s becoming easier now because you know who to contact, you know who to liaise with, you know how to solve this problem.” She followed up with an example of her messing up on a colleague’s attendance and the colleague subsequently being docked pay. She detailed how she contacted the payroll department, explained the mistake and had the decision reversed within 2 days. She concluded by thanking God it was not necessary to involve management in the matter.

Goal-meeting ability. So far as her ability to meet goals were concerned, Sara attributed her self-score of four out of five to the fact that her part-time studies have interfered with her ability to reach all goals. She explained that because of her shortened working day, it was sometimes impossible to meet deadlines for task completion, a goal she set for herself each day. She especially referred to those goals that needed time and patience to compete.

Work-place engagement - enthusiasm to go to work. In a similar pattern to her performance in the workplace, Sara scored herself a three but previously under a different manager would have given herself full rating as regards enthusiasm towards the work place. She spoke of lack of trust and not feeling wanted in the work environment and of disappointment and feelings bordering on depression. Her ambivalence towards her workplace was exemplified in the reflection, “You just think, oh, I’ll just go, do my routine work, finish reports, submitting it without talking to anyone, without any feeling, like going to work just to finish the 6 hours that you have to finish and then leave.”

Commitment to tasks. Sara complained of the stress placed upon her to get tasks finished in time to attend college in the afternoon. She rated herself a four in commitment to her tasks specifying that the 6 hours she spent per day was not enough for her to finish some tasks. This led to her having to finish them off the next day, something she saw as being wrong. She cited the specific task of taking colleagues’ attendance as an example explaining that sometimes the attendance was done the next day due to her having to leave early to attend college.

General dedication to work. Sara equated commitment with dedication to work and listed a number of work practices that in her mind added up to this dedication. This was exemplified when she said, “I don’t like to take sick leave, I don’t like to take long breaks, I don’t like to go, hang out between meetings. I always feel like responsible and because I’m responsible I don’t like to cheat the company.” She backed this up by explaining the company was paying her for 8 hours work per day and as such, “You have to work those 8 hours and not roam around and play around the organisation without their permission.”

Self-efficacy and work engagement. While not being quite as adamant as Amira, Sara conceded there was a link between self-confidence and engagement in the workplace. She linked engagement to the physical surroundings, including the people. She explained how their attitude affected her engagement by saying, “Because I’m confident about my abilities, abilities to achieve things, because of the surrounding like, the engagement comes from the surroundings, the people that surround you. How positive, they are, how negative they are.” She expanded on this by citing occasions when those colleagues around her were not positive, resulted in her not engaging in her work as well as she might.

Self-efficacy levels - enthusiasm for work. Sara identified a more direct connection between her level of self-confidence and enthusiasm for work by explaining, “Because I’m confident about my work, so I’m enthusiastic to go to work because I know what I’m going to do and I know how the process goes.” She elaborated further on this point by once again

mentioning the negative vibes that have come into the department since new management took over and conceded, “When I go to work I don’t feel that much enthusiastic though I know the work, but still as people, we still have to ignore this and do our jobs.”

Commitment and dedication to work. Sara likened commitment to finishing tasks on time and had no hesitation in linking high self-confidence to being more committed. In some cases this meant distributing the tasks amongst the team to meet the deadline. She explained that dedication gave her the self-confidence to do all tasks and that through dedication came the clear idea of how to perform the tasks.

Future career decisions and satisfaction related to past experiences. Sara indicated she was very satisfied with how her career had progressed to this point in time. She reinforced this by stating, “Previously I used to dream to work for an airline because I love the operation in it so I decided to apply, then when I get (*sic*) into there, um, I was very happy.”

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. Sara also reflected on her first promotion within a year of joining the company as being instrumental in her working hard and achieving further clarity in her current job. Her study she believed would be instrumental in helping her promote to controller of the department.

Important others - career decisions and action. Sara appeared to have little confidence in how others saw her decision-making abilities. She explained that her mother, the most important other, never wanted her to enter business school encouraging her instead to join the medical field as either a nurse or med-tech specialist. Her brothers also carried the same belief justifying their thoughts by saying that everyone was doing business courses these days and therefore there would be no future career. In direct contrast is the rating Sara believed others would give her for actioning decisions. Her reason for giving this rating was reflected in the response, “Five this time because I’ve proved them (*sic*) they’re wrong and I’m building my career path up and I know where I want to be so now they’re agreeing about my career decision.” She went on to explain that they no longer interfered because she was old enough (to make decisions) and that, “Most of the time they’re happy and proud of me and of where do I reach (*sic*) right now.”

Assistance with important career goals. Sara wished to do a master’s degree in the future so was relying on her brother to pay her way, an agreement they reached if she completed her bachelor’s degree. She saw this promise as the driving force behind her striving to do well in her current studies and move onto the master’s study. She acknowledged that her mother would also support her, not in a materialistic way, but as she

put it, “Mothers support their children by their love, by their support, by praising their children to complete further educations (*sic*), to reach their goals.”

Role models - influence on important career decisions. Sara’s past role model that influenced her career decisions was a manager she came into close contact with during every-day work. She spoke enthusiastically about the many aspects of working life she learnt from the manager such as making good decisions without regret. She explained the manager always discussed things with her even though Sara was only eighteen at the time, and how in particular she encouraged her to look forward to make future career decisions. This was demonstrated in the statements, “She always discuss (*sic*) things with me. Though I was very young at that time, I was only eighteen, she was discussing about the career decision of mine, the future career decision that I would be making.”

Influence on choosing academic majors and career paths. Sara further explained how she was encouraged by the manager to use her as a role model and of how she had had a significant influence on Sara not resigning from the workplace when she decided to further her studies and focus on them. She re-counted, “She actually talked to me and advised me that it’s better to stay on my job and to mess up with my job instead of resigning and sit (*sic*) home doing nothing only studying.” She helped Sara to understand that with the job market the way it was at the time it was better to, “Keep studying while working. At least you have a job when you graduate, not like others who sits (*sic*), who are jobless right now.”

Reliance on others when making decisions. Sara denied relying on others when making decisions. She justified this by saying, “I don’t ask anyone because in my opinion, it’s my decision so I want to take the full responsibility of (*sic*) it.” She elaborated further by looking at the consequences of relying on others by reflecting, “If I rely on others or I rely on role models, maybe the decision that I take or the decision that I will make because of them, maybe in the future I’ll not be happy.” She finished by summarising the responsibility she felt for future consequences of allowing someone else to make decisions on her behalf and categorically stated she did not wish to blame others for any presumably undesirable results.

Assistance with choosing future goals. Sara, predicted she would fall back on mentors or former managers to assist her achieving future goals. She indicated that her role model would follow the usual role of a mentor who would give training and advice. This was reflected in her statement, “Supporting me by giving me extra trainings and she will mentor what I’m doing and of course any role model will give a good advice for the employees to achieve their future career goals because they have experience.”

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. Sara was a little more precise with her responses in relation to future plans having explained them in more detail in previous sections. She indicated that both completing her education degree and getting promoted were on her future agenda. Changing organisations however was something she has, for the time being, put on hold because as she explained, “I didn’t reach to the career goal that I want.” She expressed no plan to open her own business in the immediate future.

The case of Marwa.

Self-efficacy - performance in the workplace. As a student and full-time employee, Marwa stopped short of giving herself a full rating for performance in the workplace by stating, “Basically I can’t do as much as a person who’s a full-time employee so I’m considered as a part-time employee so if I can rate myself I’d say I’m between three and a half and four only”. Later in the interview, however, she upgraded herself to a four because, “I am giving my level best to my job as well, at the same time as giving the best to my college or my studies.” This indicated Marwa equated performance levels with effort.

Problem-solving ability. In relation to problem-solving ability, Marwa equated getting others to help solve a problem to her solving the problem. She emphatically stated that she couldn’t think of a problem she had faced that had remained unsolved. She explained if she felt as though she couldn’t solve it, she would seek the advice of colleagues or a department or management. She further justified her high self-rating by stating, “But I give myself a rate (*sic*) of five because I know that I do solve things on time especially when it’s an issue or it’s a problem.”

She went on to explain that her problems revolved mainly around people falling into three categories such as dealing with people, both employees and customers, dealing with IT systems, and issues related to trainings that may be set down for employees. She exemplified this by stating, “I face problems with employees sometimes complaining that they’ve applied for a training course for example. Their training request form goes to their line manager, it gets signed but then it comes to us too late sometimes because of the internal transfer or whatever internal issues that we have within the company,” and resigned herself to the fact that she faced such issues in the course of her every day duties.

Goal-meeting ability. In a similar fashion to Sara, Marwa scored herself lower for goal-meeting ability and also identified her part-time studies as the obstruction. She stressed a need to prioritise one over the other—study over work—especially during exam time for example. She explained her goal setting achievements by saying, “I do put (*sic*) goals, I try to reach them but sometimes we reach the end of the year and I’m not like, I’m not like 100%

completed my goal. It might be on 80% or 90% and then the 10% I'll move it to the year after." She gave a specific example of having to move a personal development goal for the completion of the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) course in 2017 to 2018 because of unexpected interferences.

Work-place engagement - enthusiasm to go to work. Marwa scored herself a four in relation to enthusiasm for going to work. She attributed her rating to the fact that she had a long distance to travel to work and then had to make a journey at the end of the day back to college before returning home. She resented the fact of having to spend her whole life in the car and blamed her low score on this. She finished by saying, "Otherwise I consider myself at six if it wasn't too far from where I live." When pressed for an example of when she would be a six, she explained that once at work she equated engagement with challenge and motivation stating, "I think I'm engaged because I do new things every day. Things are not repeated in my work, so that keeps me ongoing because it keeps on my learning (*sic*)."

Commitment to tasks. Like Sara, Marwa gave herself a six for her commitment to tasks because of how she was prepared to move her breaks to fulfil the work load on any given day. Sometimes this meant she went without a lunch break. She expressed how important it was for her to respond quickly to customer demands and not keep them waiting so that complaints would be kept to a minimum and so that those same people could get back to her, "to ask me for whatever they want next time." Marwa also rated herself full marks for dedication, offering the reasons that appear in the previous section such as not taking a lunch break, moving the break to accommodate work load and in general, responding to customer demand to avoid complaints.

Self-efficacy and work engagement. Marwa rated the link between self-confidence and engagement as a definite 80% with her justification being that sometimes, she needed to call other people for assistance as she was still at the learning stage. She clarified this by saying, "This is the rate (*sic*) I give myself because if I get 20% of training I would definitely be at 100% (*sic*) of being so confident of doing my job and that will make me be more enthusiastic towards doing my job or towards being proactive." When asked whether overall engagement would lead to higher self-confidence and ability to achieve better, she predicted she could see this happening and went onto explain that managers by default had several to look after so it was difficult for them to single out one employee to engage with. She linked this to her interpretation of engagement by saying, "There are times where we feel we're not engaged at all and there are times when we feel, yes, she is keeping us engaged, keeping us

involved in everything.” Engagement in this instance included opinions and decisions that came up during the course of everyday work.

Self-efficacy levels - enthusiasm for work. In contrast to other participants, Marwa did not see a direct link between self-confidence and her enthusiasm for work each day. She explained this by saying she had to be confident about what she did every day and when she went into the office, she was there for a reason. As such she believed the work place saw she had the abilities required for the job. By default, this gave her more confidence. When asked whether the reverse was true, Marwa again gave an example of how her enthusiasm to plan ahead by making up a list of tasks to be done at work the next day helped her prioritise and complete the tasks. Sometimes she needed to stay late at the office to complete these tasks. This subsequently fed into her self-confidence.

Commitment to work. Marwa saw a definite link between self-confidence and commitment but did not necessarily agree that the reverse might be true. She gave examples of confidence of being able to do things using her abilities and explained, “If I’m confident I can do things, can achieve things or I know how to do something, then definitely that will affect the level of the job which I’m delivering.” She explained that the reverse was not necessarily true, as to her, confidence was gained from the tasks she was able to perform well in.

General dedication to work. Marwa failed to see a direct link between self-confidence and dedication in performing tasks in the workplace. She reasoned, “Dedication towards my work or towards the company should be there even if I’m confident about or not confident about what I do.” She saw confidence as a personal thing and dedication towards a company, a job or even a department as something that was mandatory. This is reflected in her statement, “Dedication towards the company definitely I have to have. I HAVE to have it because it’s something that has to be there in each and every employee.”

Future career decisions and satisfaction related to past experiences. Marwa’s reasoning behind giving herself a four out of five for satisfaction with career decisions was summed up in the statements, “I still see that I can reach somewhere beyond where I am at the moment so I would say four. I’m happy of (*sic*) where I am at the moment but I do see that I can still go beyond that.” She cited as one of the main reasons for leaving a previous company to make a lateral career move was the lack of flexibility in being able to pursue her studies and of being considered a part-time employee had she done so. As was the case with Amira, study has played an important role so far in her career path.

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. Marwa was convinced that the experience gained in her previous company and that she was gaining now would hold her in good stead in the future as she had found her niche in the Human Resources departments of both companies and had ambitions to one day become an HR or Emiratisation manager. This was reflected in her comment, “I started in the thing I love and I found myself in it and I think this will help me to become someday an HR manager or Emiratisation manager in some company.”

Important others - career decisions and action. Marwa’s predicted rating from important others was between a three and a half and a four. She first referred to work colleagues explaining that they saw what she was capable of and believed she was future leader material. She explained that because she had an open personality, she could sit with management and not be afraid to speak out—something which other work colleagues had fear of doing. She cited her family as also believing in her ability to make right career decisions offering the example, “They think that since I started, I developed myself a lot. From the first job, I did develop myself a lot and they can see it.” When asked how these others would rate her for putting the decisions into action, she reported a five stating, “To others they know me that as soon as I decide something then I really do it, I go for it. Yeah, so that’s why, that’s others.”

Assistance with important career goals. Marwa confessed to always getting advice from the family before moving forward on anything related to her career. She also described how she relied on colleagues who knew both internal and external markets well for advice and hinted at asking those outside the department in which she worked for their opinions. By doing so, she hoped to get a clearer picture as to whether she should stay with the organisation or move onto another. Her final comments again pertained to her family whom she summed up as, “They’ll always see what’s better for me. Looking at the factors, they’re elder (*sic*) or they’re wiser or they’ve experienced more in life.”

Role models - influence on important career decisions. Like other participants, Marwa also acknowledged the importance of a former General Manager of the Human Resources group, a national, saying she saw him as a leader who always made the right decisions and reached heights that others couldn’t reach. In particular, he encouraged her to stick with the same company as long as possible and work her way up through the ranks. She felt as though he was always interested in where she was going with her career as reflected in her remark, “He was always giving us the advice, he was always concerned about our future or where do you go when I resign from the company. He was really worried about me going

to another company and starting all over again because he always thought wherever you start, just continue.” Marwa’s greatest compliment was stating that if she ever had the chance to return to the company where he was, she would. In contrast, she denied anyone had influenced her choice of academic majors in relation to career paths.

Reliance on others when making decisions. Marwa described herself as a tough person so far as making her own decisions were concerned. She emphasised that regardless of whether the decision turned out to be right or wrong, she wanted to try and experience life and confessed, “I do take others’ advice like of how I can do it. Yes I’ll take their advice but people planning my life, no.” She then clarified by adding that the people she would most likely take advice from would be family members.

Assistance with choosing future goals. Marwa once again referenced her former local manager with regard to receiving assistance in goal choice and explained that his experience in the workplace would hold him in good stead to be able to support her. She also predicted that additional future support would come from, as previously mentioned, work colleagues who she believed had had experience in numerous companies and would “have a wider view of the future or a wider view of how things happen outside in different companies.”

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. At the age of thirty-five, Marwa was keen to complete her bachelor’s degree, and then to pursue both a master’s and doctorate in the future. She planned to continue her master’s as soon as she has completed her bachelor’s and if she got the chance, would then pursue her doctorate. She assumed her current employer would give her a promotion once she completed her bachelor’s degree but said if this didn’t happen she would continue searching the labour market, presumably to switch companies. As to opening her own business, Marwa summed it up by saying, “Opening my own business is something I’m looking at at the moment and looking (*sic*) to open up my own restaurant.” She credited studying business as giving her the confidence to open her own business when she stated, “This is what I feel I am interested in. Looking at the fact that I’m studying business I can definitely manage my own business.”

The case of Khadija.

Self-efficacy - performance in the workplace. Khadija justified giving herself a rating of four out of a possible five by stating, “I think they give me a lot more responsibility than they do other staff members like the other tellers. Usually I’m their go-to person for transactions when it comes to their VIP customers.” She then directly equated the added responsibility given to her with more self-confidence in her ability to perform at a better level than other employees and conceded, “I think they come to me to challenge me, so I can get

used to being under a lot of stress, maybe get used to constantly work (*sic*) and not have so much free time.”

Problem-solving ability. Khadija scored herself three out of a possible five on her ability to solve problems in the workplace but had a logical explanation for this relatively low score. She differentiated between two kinds of confidence, one in relation to the handling of money, and the other in relation to handling customers. She indicated that previously she was much more confident in relation to the money side of her job, always looking at the worst case scenarios and then working ahead of time to find solutions for the imagined problems. She perceived customers as being much more difficult to handle explaining the difference as, “Money is money like if you lose it, you have like excess in your cash or shortage you know that you can handle but it’s customers that you face that are just different personalities, different types that you can’t think what’s gonna happen, because they’re humans.” She gave a specific example of her inability to handle an elderly local customer who screamed and refused to take a token and join the queue to be served. She reflected, “A manager had to step in and take him aside. But I think, looking at it now I could have said something but I let him scream.”

Goal-meeting ability. Khadija’s self-rating of four point five was, on her own admission, very much mood dependent. She explained that every day there were targets to be met in relation to the number of transactions completed and that, “Sometimes I feel like, today I want to achieve a hundred transactions. Then I do achieve that. It just depends on my mood for the day.” With some prompting, she then moved on to explain how she had also managed to achieve some longer-term goals such as setting her sights on winning an award for best customer service and how the certificates and trophy now sat in her home on display. This, she admitted, made her feel more confident in her ability to reach set goals.

Work-place engagement - enthusiasm to go to work. Khadija’s self-rating is a little complex in that for two out of the 2.5 years she worked for the bank, she scored herself a four out of six for enthusiasm towards work but then dropped herself to a two because of a change of manager. When questioned further, she cited not feeling support from the new manager as the principle reason for the decline adding, “I felt like when my old manager left, everything just came crashing down within the branch.” She added that under the first manager there was always a feeling of togetherness with the work place feeling like home but that that wasn’t the case under the new manager. “I feel like the branch, we were always together, we always had each other’s back but when the new manager came, everyone was like on their own and that just didn’t make me feel I was welcome. My second home was my work.”

Commitment to tasks. Khadija rated herself a four for commitment to tasks and stressed that if she had other commitments such as college commitments on a particular day, she would work harder and faster in order to be able to leave the work place to get to college in plenty of time to fulfil her duties there. In these circumstances, she would give herself a five. Her commitment to report checking was evident as her leaving time was contingent upon completing this duty each day. She thereby tried to check pending reports early to be able to get away on time.

General dedication to work. Khadija openly admitted that her self-rating of five was linked to her evening studies and that, "Education is always number one priority. Second comes my work." She, like Sara and Marwa, confessed that because of her dedication to study, she was unable to give her best at work and because of her current situation, she "could give it a lot more but because of college I don't."

Self-efficacy and work engagement. When asked of the relationship between self-confidence and engagement in the workplace, Khadija without hesitation identified a positive correlation by stating, "If you are confident in yourself and you believe in yourself that you can succeed then your engagement will be a lot more." When asked if the reverse might be true, her response was again affirmative, "Because if I'm working hard every single day and I'm giving all to my job, it makes me confident because I know this work, and I know this job and maybe there's not a lot of people that can do it as well as I can and that builds my confidence."

Self-efficacy levels - enthusiasm for work. When asked about how self-confidence affected her enthusiasm to go to work each day, Khadija's response was, "It does affect. Maybe if there was for example one day where I did like an error, and then like oh, I'm feeling down, I may not be that excited to go back to work again." When questioned of the knock-on effect of enthusiasm and self-confidence building in day to day work, she identified a positive link citing in particular awards she had won that had made her more confident to go to work each day and work harder.

Commitment to work. Khadija was of the opinion that if she had self-confidence in what she was doing, she would work a lot harder. She cited a time in the workplace where she was forced to deal with many illiterate customers. The task set by her organisation, enabled her to gain a lot of confidence in dealing with these customers even though to begin with, she felt great trepidation. When questioned of a time when her self-confidence dipped, she freely cited an example of her not understanding how to do international money transfers and of gladly passing the task over to colleagues to complete.

General dedication to work. Khadija saw a very clear correlation between self-confidence in the workplace and dedication to tasks and exemplified this perception through her comments, “If my confidence is medium, like the effort I’m putting in is medium. If I am very confident in myself, I would give my job my all, everything, I’d be so dedicated to it.”

Future career decisions and satisfaction related to past experiences. Khadija, whose career also began in banking, saw her career as beginning with her graduation from high school at the age of seventeen and then immediately taking up work with the bank while at the same time studying. She worked for 6 months in the finance department, left the bank but then returned to another bank position for a further 2.5 years. She summed up her thoughts on this career path by saying, “I am very happy with the choices I made in my career because I feel it did shape me as a person and did shape where I want to go as far as a career path and direction I wanted to go so I am satisfied.”

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. Hindsight taught Khadija that she was in fact quite successful as a teller in her first bank. She believed that she now has a clearer picture of what she wants to do given the experience. She reflected on the awards won during this time and how much more knowledgeable now she was and mused, “I think it would help me set more goals for my future career.”

Important others - career decisions and action. In contrast to previous participants, Khadija had no hesitation in nominating colleagues, family and friends as being impressed at what she has achieved in her career to this point, and in how they would rate her on the five-point scale. This is reflected in her statement, “I would honestly say a five because I’m surrounded now by girls who don’t work, who are shocked when I tell them I graduated high school and directly got a job. I think my parents are mostly proud of me for doing that so I think people around me are satisfied.”

Assistance with important career goals. Khadija appeared to rely heavily on her family and friends so far as assistance with future goals was concerned. She anticipated they would be of most help in supporting her and offering other options that she may not necessarily be aware of. She summed this up by saying, “Maybe I might be stuck in where I want to go as far as career because there’s just many different paths and turns you can go and maybe you can consult someone especially when someone important to you. Their opinions matter. My dad, my brother and my sister.” When asked why she would specifically consult these three people she replied that they all had the same work ethic and mind and that family members balanced each other in their approach—her father thinks in the past, her brother in the present and her sister thinks into the future. On being pressed regarding how friends may

assist, she admitted that they would not be of such value as the family as many of them were of the mind-set that they didn't have to work and would instead get married.

Role models - influence on important career decisions. Khadija admitted to having followed in the footsteps of her previous manager so far as her career was concerned and was still in constant contact with the former manager. She explained that the manager was in a position that Khadija aspired to in the future—branch manager—and that she has seen her climb the ranks from customer service, to teller to teller level 2. As such, she has asked her about the challenges she has faced and for advice on how she handled those challenges. Like Marwa, Khadija stipulated that the role model is a local.

Influence on choosing academic majors and career paths. Like Sara, Khadija's ex-manager encouraged her to pursue higher education after graduation. She explained this by reflecting on the advice given to her as, "As long as you have your education you would always have your job and you would always be promoted a lot faster with your education."

Reliance on others when making decisions. Khadija admitted to seeking family's opinion when making decisions. She did however stipulate that the choice of advice depended on the type of decision that needed to be made. If the decision only affected herself, then she would go it alone. If however it involved the family, then they too would be consulted.

Assistance with choosing future goals. With reference again to her former manager and now friend, Khadija confidently predicted that she would be assisted by the manager's "good" word for her. She explained the importance of this in the statement, "I think that she would help me because she is in a high position so her word matters and her recommendation matters so I think she would help me a lot." In her role as branch manager, Khadija could see the friend assisting her to work her way up the career ladder from assistant manager to branch manager. She saw this assistance as being constant.

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. Khadija, like Marwa, had plans to complete her master's after finishing off her bachelor's in December. She too was expecting that her newly-acquired academic degree would grant her a promotion. She indicated she may well return to the work-force full-time in the future. She confessed to most likely returning to the banking and finance industry but also indicated she had a curiosity to explore what else is out there so far as career direction is concerned. This was exemplified in her reflection, "I would say I'm 80% leaning on banking and finance but 20% wanting to see what's out there. Wanting to experience something new." Khadija also had plans to open her own business in the future, a business related to the beauty/cosmetic industry.

The case of Dina.

Self-efficacy - performance in the workplace. A response by Dina to the first question on self-efficacy and performance equated performance levels with working within the boundaries of tasks she was given, with the inference that, were she given more, she would be capable of reaching higher levels. She reflected, “Well I’m actually new in the department so I do the tasks given to me. I’m just limited to that and I don’t think I’m doing anything more than that at the moment.”

Problem-solving ability. In an unusual admission Dina, without hesitation, indicated that she would score herself four so far as solving problems at work were concerned but followed up by inferring that this was mainly due to the fact she wasn’t being challenged enough in the workplace by her managers. She observed that the jobs were not being taught to her and that, “They’re just telling me how to do it and that’s it like, it’s not being explained to me properly, why I’m doing it or what it means.” As such, the score of four appeared to not be a reflection of what she believed she was capable of achieving. This theme of being under-utilised in the workplace by managers surfaced later in the interview.

Goal-meeting ability. Dina explained that when she set a goal she, “Makes sure that it’s done, always works towards it, and doesn’t just let it be.” She further explained that she went beyond simply learning from those teaching or training her and that if she had doubts she would do the additional research herself to better understand the concept. “I make sure I go learn about it to make sure to know what it means and not depend on somebody else so I make sure I go look at it myself.” As such her basic goals were sometimes extended to include additional tuition, usually from websites related to accounting. In this capacity, she felt her self-rating of five was justified.

Work-place engagement - enthusiasm to go to work. Dina’s enthusiasm to go to work has also dwindled over the 2 years she has been with her organisation so she rated herself a four in this area. She labelled herself as a trainee because of the types of tasks she was given on a daily basis and complained about the lack of direction offered her by her manager. This was exemplified when she stated, “They’re not giving me that responsibility yet or treating me like, I’m gonna be working with them as a full-time. I’m not sure where I’m heading at work itself so I feel like really confused right now. And I don’t feel eager to go and do it!”

Commitment to tasks. Despite rating herself a four out of six for enthusiasm to go to work each day, Dina confidently gave herself a six for commitment to tasks. She listed tasks such as accounting reconciliations and reports done on a daily basis and stressed that the quality and timeliness of this work was of utmost importance to her. “Whatever I have to do I make sure I do it well and even with the time given to me I do my work properly and yeah, I don’t slack in any way, you know or anything.” This was perhaps another factor that added to her feeling of confusion over why she had not advanced beyond what she called “trainee status” in the organisation after more than 2 years.

General dedication to work. Dina explained her self-rating of six, the top rating, through her work ethic of enjoyment in working hard, learning new things and doing her job well. She added that this was not only to benefit herself, but also to benefit the company and summarised by saying, “I really like to help so I would say I’m dedicated, really dedicated.”

Self-efficacy and work engagement. Dina needed to ponder for some time with regards to self-confidence and level of engagement but once she had the question clear in her mind, she responded with, “I’ll just put it this way, when I DON’T feel confident about what I’m doing, like I doubt almost everything I do because I’m not sure about it. I feel like I can’t progress in that way, I feel like I’m not sure about what I’m doing or confident.” She saw a distinct link between engagement and self-confidence offering, “The more engaged I am or I’m given something to be engaged with I think somehow it will boost up my confidence, it will.”

Self-efficacy levels - enthusiasm for work. Dina was initially much more hesitant than Amira, Sara and Khadija in making the connection between level of confidence and enthusiasm to go to work each day. She eventually settled on there being a link by stating, “Ah, maybe not, yeah actually it kinda somewhat affects my enthusiasm to go to work” and went on to explain that, “If you’re not confident about doing something, you’re not eager to go to work and just face the day and or you’re not sure what’s there.” She elaborated further by explaining that when issues arose and she was not sure of how to deal with them, then she would feel a little intimidated if those same issues arose again. She was adamant that the reverse was true in relation to enthusiasm and self-confidence when she stated, “If I’m really enthusiastic I’ll be, I think I’ll be very confident (laughs) yeah.”

Commitment to work. Despite rating herself as a four out of six for enthusiasm to go to work each day, Dina confidently gave herself a six for commitment to tasks. She listed tasks such as accounting reconciliations and reports done on a daily basis and stressed that the quality and timeliness of this work was of utmost importance to her. “Whatever I have to

do I make sure I do it well and even with the time given to me I do my work properly and . . . yeah, I don't slack in any way, you know or anything." This is perhaps another factor that added to her feeling of confusion over why she had not advanced beyond what she called "trainee status" in the organisation after more than 2 years.

Dina had doubts as to whether level of self-confidence affected commitment to work as reflected in her response, "I don't think it affects much because regardless of whether I'm confident or not I will still commit to my work and do it somehow. I won't like just back out because I'm not confident, I'll still be committed."

General dedication to work. Dina saw level of self-confidence as having a partial link to dedication but did not see it as the main driver of her dedication. She reflected it was more those attributes that led to confidence like doing interesting things or being given challenging tasks or more responsibility and trust in the company that were likely to increase her self-confidence rather than dedication.

Future career decisions and satisfaction related to past experiences. In contrast to the other participants, Dina scored herself a three for satisfaction with her current status. This was unsurprising as she had previously spoken of discontent alluding to the fact that she had no direction at the present time. She described how she had at first tried engineering after graduating from school but that hadn't worked out. She then moved to the finance sector and studied part-time for her degree. She alluded to having been persuaded to pursue a path not of her own choosing when she said, "I think it's because growing up we're taught to, you know, be a certain someone, think of certain things and I feel like I was told differently, like to actually pursue what I really liked I probably wouldn't have gone for the same choices." When it was suggested that both banking and finance might have restricted her somewhat in her career choice, Dina agreed.

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. In her response to the question regarding past successes and future goals Dina was confident she now knows what she doesn't want to pursue career-wise. She stated, "I've done finance and, I've learnt a lot of things and it kinda like opens a way for me to have different future goals let's say." She hoped to utilise the experience gained in the past to open her own business in the future.

Important others - career decisions and action. Dina nominated her family, in particular her sister who she said knew her very well, as the most important others and believed they would all rate her a four on career making decisions. She credited this rating to her ability to consider all avenues including parental consideration before she made a career decision. Sometimes, she conceded, it may not have been the best decision as she had tried to

please others. Her mother's rating though was higher as reflected in the comment, "I think she would rate me a five. I think she trusts me in what I take, yeah." As regards ratings from outside the family on her ability to action decisions, Dina summed it up as, "I would say a five. I mean to, to others they know me that as soon as I decide something then I really do it, I go for it. Yeah, so that's why, that's others."

Assistance with important career goals. Dina understood that her important others would play a supportive role in assisting her achieve future career goals and like Khadija made mention of using their different perspectives. She conceded that even though it was ultimately her decision, she did care about their view points and in the end wanted them to approve of and accept her decisions. In fact, she acknowledged that this acceptance would be the main element that would guide her actions towards future career goals.

Role models - influence on important career decisions. Dina identified learning from risk-takers in general even when their decisions may have gone against the norm. She elaborated on this statement by explaining that growing up, she was encouraged by the family to either be a doctor or an engineer, without considering the freer type careers such as the arts. As a result, she admitted to nowadays really admiring those that followed their interests and hobbies and acknowledged that they have enabled her to see other options. These thoughts are expressed in, "You know I've taken already a lot of things but when I see them go for it, you can actually do something you really like as a career. So yeah, so those people who actually do it, I really admire that." When asked whether these role models directly assisted her in her career decisions, Dina explained that only recently since completing college has she been able to see the options. She detailed, "I am considering other options now in my career. I don't want to stick to what I do. I am grateful for what I learn and the things I've taken but doing something, maybe opening up a business to something you like, that's also an option."

Influence on choosing academic majors and career paths. No influencers were nominated by Dina so far as academic majors and career paths were concerned.

Reliance on others when making decisions. As indicated previously, Dina felt an obligation to involve the family—she specified her sister and mother—in making decisions as needing to gain their approval before a decision was actioned.

Assistance with choosing future goals. Outside sources such as artistic people who have their own minds and go for it were identified as being influential enough to direct Dina with her future goals. She detailed her reasons for this by offering, "The fact that they actually succeeded in doing what they do. I feel like it just gives me a, maybe a chance to try

it out or even a hope that you know there's still a way." In contrast to Amira however, she did not see start-up age as being a barrier believing that at any age, you could pursue something that you liked.

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. Unlike the previous participants, Dina was, understandably, very cautious when it came to committing to future study. In the past she chose to study abroad, realising after a couple of semesters she was not in her field of expertise. She returned to the UAE and pursued a Bachelor in Finance and Banking which was being utilised in her current position. This caution can be seen in her statement, "I don't want to make a decision again without you know fully considering it this time. I want to take my time in figuring out what I want to do."

Also in contrast to other participants, Dina did not place a priority on getting a promotion. To her what she did work-wise was more important rather than getting a promotion for the sake of it. She is considering switching to the government sector to, "See what it's like 'cause I've been with a private, (*sic*) this is semi-private but it's almost like a private like maybe now 5 years almost." Her primary reason was to compare the differences between the private and the public sectors.

With regard to opening her own business, Dina indicated she would like to open a gym for women who are usually not comfortable in a gym setting. She especially mentioned that she would target Emirati women when marketing the gym and reflected on how intimidated she felt when she first started attending a gym. Her ambition to help others stemmed from her own growth in confidence as a direct result of gym work; she has taken up competitive weight lifting recently. She finished by explaining, "But now that I got used to it I'm actually starting to have ideas on how I want it to be."

The case of Samira.

Self-efficacy - performance in the workplace. In relation to performance in the workplace, Samira stated, "Well I'm receiving beyond satisfactory recommendations from my manager. That's what they are saying and the last performance appraisal they have given me four for exceeding the expectation." She then justified this rating by adding that she usually took initiatives and would go beyond her scope of responsibility to accomplish her work. She cited a past initiative of doing a training needs analysis to ascertain whether, in her role as a trainer, the training was fully justified.

Problem-solving ability. Samira explained her relatively low self-score of three out of a possible five by indicating that decision making in her organisation was centralised so she thereby felt obliged to run all decisions back through them. She acknowledged it had nothing

to do with her own abilities, but always sought approval of management before taking action indicating centralisation was an integral part of the corporate culture. She offered an example of an employee she identified as having learning difficulties but was obliged to discuss these with management before taking the initiative to proceed with a specialised training program for them. As such, Samira indicated that her score of three was more to do with the restrictions placed on her by the organisation than with her own ability to solve problems.

Goal-meeting ability. Samira prided herself in being very realistic when it came to goal setting explaining, “I don’t set them too easy nor too difficult.” She stressed that goals were set in collaboration with her managers, “So they are very clear about their expectation and so on,” and attributed her success in achieving and on occasions going beyond her goal expectations over the past 2 years, to this process. She clarified this with an example of there being neither a training department nor any documentation of training that had taken place when she initially joined the company and of how she set goals to rectify the situation. In Samira’s words, “There was no differentiation between the horizontal and vertical types of training or whether it’s soft skills or technical skills so that was my goal within the first year to set what is the training department about and set some goals for that department.” She went on to do just that.

Work-place engagement - enthusiasm to go to work. Samira linked her rating of five out of six to her enthusiasm to arriving at work at least 15 minutes before the official start time and to staying when required past the official finish time. She explained this by stating, “I mean when we sign in, we have to be there at eight but I would usually be fifteen or 20 minutes earlier than that and I would stay later than the required working hours past 3 o’clock.”

Commitment to tasks. In contrast to her high rating for enthusiasm for the work place, Samira’s self-rating for commitment to tasks dropped somewhat dramatically to a three. She explained this by reflecting that sometimes she was distracted by unexpected tasks that subsequently blocked her intention of commitment to specific, anticipated tasks. She conceded however that when this was the case she, “Would stay overtime sometimes just to accomplish some of what I planned for earlier in the day.”

Samira stated emphatically, “Whether I’m confident about, you know about reaching the job (*sic*) or being able to complete the tasks, I would still be committed to do it.” When asked whether her commitment linked back to or reflected her level of confidence, Samira however stopped short of acknowledging that the reverse may be true—that is, does commitment link back to self-confidence — by stating, “Whenever I feel more committed to

do it and I believe in the goal or the reason why I'm doing this project it will help me to be more enthusiastic to do that and more committed." She therefore linked commitment more to enthusiasm.

General dedication to work. In contrast, Samira was unhesitant in giving herself the five as regards dedication to work citing that she worked from home sometimes getting emotionally attached to the task—certain activities or projects—that she felt would be good for the organisation. She offered an example of a training session whereby she anticipated what may have been needed for the session to be a success and followed through without any prompting from the organisation. This was exemplified when she said, "I could read into it that it may be needed during the training day, I would just go ahead and organise it and make it ready even though the others didn't ask for it."

Self-efficacy and work engagement. Samira was the only respondent that offered a different response on the link between self-confidence and engagement. She offered the reason for this as being she was a new graduate and had a lot to learn since she had only been in the organisation for 2 years. She acknowledged that even though she was passionate, enthusiastic and motivated to do her work she may not have been 100% confident in her own skills. She readily accepted that the reverse may hold true when she stated, "Even if sometimes I do not feel confident in my abilities because new things happen, I would still be committed." She went on to explain that the degree of commitment could vary but more from the perspective of disappointment in relation to her expectations she had for herself and added this could affect her psychologically in a negative way.

Self-efficacy levels - enthusiasm for work. Samira openly acknowledged the association between self-confidence and enthusiasm when she explained, "When I have something that I'm not very confident, a new task or a project that's running on and I don't have that confidence that I will be able to do it, I could struggle a bit motivating myself to go to work." She reinforced this statement by explaining that she may get a little worried with regards to her ability to be able to complete the task but that as soon as she was in the work environment, the doubt faded away. On being questioned about the enthusiasm instilling self-confidence, she gave the definitive reply, "Yes, when I'm enthusiastic, I will just push myself. I would say a positive affirmative to myself. "You can do it, you can overcome this." So it will help me to be able to work harder and be more committed to reach the task."

General dedication to work. Samira was also adamant in her reflections with regards to level of confidence and general dedication to work tasks. She stated, "Definitely

confidence will make me feel more dedicated. At least I know what I'm doing and I'm confident of it (*sic*) so I'd be more dedicated to do that."

Future career decisions and satisfaction related to past experiences. Samira's reason for giving herself a five for satisfaction in the direction her career in IT has headed thus far is that she has gone in the opposite direction of the rest of her family who are all in the medical field. She spoke of her struggle at the beginning to approach companies for a position because of her lack of experience but overcame this by doing a lot of volunteering and taking up trainings in internships. Her first job in an IT company resulted in her electing to rotate amongst different departments. This together with the volunteering and training resulted in her growing interest, and subsequently acted upon, in the Human Resources department which coincided with the push by the federal government to have Emiratis as heads of such departments. She ended up in the training section of the Human Resources department.

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. Samira contributed her 8 months internship with IBM in Canada for landing her first job in Dubai even though she did not have the required experience. She felt as though this instilled confidence in the managers to give her a chance to succeed. She made no mention however regarding how this success might contribute to future career goals.

Important others - career decisions and action. In a very similar pattern to Sara, Samira whose family was also very medically oriented, would have initially scored her a one on her ability to make good career decisions. She explained how this was so in the comment, "I did a dramatic shift going to a different direction that is not medicine. So they were not very happy and they were verbal about it. They actually told me that they don't approve what I'm doing but now after 2 years I'd say that they are more accepting of my decisions."

So far as the rating her family would give her for her ability to action the career decisions is concerned, Samira conceded that now, perhaps they have moved to a two having gained more confidence in her. Her hope for the future is expressed in the logic, "I think still they cannot see why I did not choose to be what they were hoping for me to be which is a doctor. But over the years I'm sure that they will find out that I had a reason and that not everyone is the same."

Assistance with important career goals. All participants acknowledged that in some form or another, they would expect to be assisted by others considered important to them. Samira's presumption however came with a twist in that she saw them as a catalyst for her working harder in order to prove to them that her choice of career was justified. This was

exemplified in her statement, “Well it’s in an interesting way because I have to prove to them that I did not do the wrong decision. So I have to work extra hard to succeed so they can see the fruit of all the work I’m doing so they can at least approve of it.”

Role models - influence on important career decisions. Samira initially claimed to currently not having a role model but on being further questioned, reluctantly admitted that perhaps her father could be considered as one. She explained that even though he had insisted on her being a doctor in line with the rest of the family, he himself had experimented very successfully with various careers over time. This is reflected in her response, “He’s one of the people that started, for example, he had the first studio recording in Qatar. He has a boutique, he has a construction company so he moved from one business to another and they are all successful.” She defended her stance on not having him as a role model however when she added, “So he could be the person, a good role model that he does very good career decisions but I don’t look up to him to be like him because I don’t see myself as the entrepreneur.”

Influence on choosing academic majors and career paths. No influencers were identified by Samira in relation to the choice of academic majors and career paths.

Reliance on others when making decisions. On her own admission, Samira is particularly opinionated, so confessed to not allowing anyone else but herself to make decisions. She summed it up somewhat abruptly by stating, “I’m very flexible about anything in life except decisions, my own future decisions. I’m very opinionated about it. I ask people, I ask for their advice and seek for (*sic*) their opinion but by the end of it I take my own decision.”

Assistance with choosing future goals. Samira was a little less confident regarding assistance from others in helping her achieve her future goals and inserted the caveat, “Hopefully, hopefully. Probably after they understand me better they will. Enshallah.”

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. Part of Samira’s future plans included pursuing further educational studies. She has attained both bachelor’s and master’s degrees and is currently planning to pursue a PhD. She stressed that she has changed direction over the years in relation to study with her bachelor’s degree being in IT (Information Technology) and her master’s degree being in Human Resources. She indicated that her plan is to pursue a PhD in knowledge management and learning offering the reason, “I find myself very dedicated and passionate about training people and making people learn about new things and so on.” A promotion is very much in her vision because she is, “Working very hard on building the basis of the department and I would like to you know,

proceed to the next level.” She stated very bluntly that should the organisation she is currently employed in not fulfil her needs in terms of a promotion, she will search for another organisation in which to work. Although she had no plans to open her own business, she reflected on the fact that her father was an entrepreneur so she was open to that area in future.

Discussion

Self-efficacy in relation to current job. In an overall endeavour to both extract and understand participant sources of self-efficacy, the first section of Study 3 concentrated on performance in the workplace, problem-solving abilities and goal-meeting abilities. Through a relatively structured set of questions derived from the OSES and the UWES, the aim was to seek a relationship between participants’ self-efficacy and workplace practices. Participants rated themselves on a scale of one to five with one being not very confident to five representing very confident. Summarised and discussed in the paragraphs that follow are the analyses from each of the three practices; performance in the workplace, problem-solving abilities and goal-meeting abilities.

Performance in the workplace. Occupational self-efficacy as a concept as identified by Rigotti et al., (2008) recognises self-efficacy as being domain-specific and represents how confident a person feels in their ability to fulfil everyday work tasks. Job satisfaction and job commitment have also been found to be related to occupational self-efficacy in certain countries, countries that until now have not included the Middle East region. Assumptions emanating from former studies as cited by Rigotti et al., (2008) include self-efficacy as being positively related to performance—the higher the self-efficacy, the better the persistence (Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991)—and seeking of challenges which in turn leads to a higher performance. Some questions for the first section of Study 3 were based on Rigotti’s et al., (2008) shortened version of the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale. Others were based on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Examples of these are:

1. How confident are you that you can handle problems in your current job when they come along? (Rigotti’s et al., 2008)
2. How enthusiastic are you to go to work each day? (Schaufeli et al., 2006)

All participants except one were very confident regarding their current performance in their respective workplaces. Justifications for this confidence ranged from exceeding manager expectations in a given task and subsequently being rewarded in the performance appraisal, to being given much responsibility with VIP customers on a daily basis to showing initiative. On one occasion, performance levels were equated with effort; effort that comprised holding down a full-time position as well as studying four nights a week to

complete a bachelor's degree. The participant who gave herself a lower ranking blamed her fall in self-confidence and performance on a distrustful manager. Self-efficacy sources were therefore identified as a mix of others' actions as well as self-effort.

Problem-solving ability. Sources of problem-solving ability were again derived from assistance from others such as colleagues as well as self. Managers however were not always thought of as being good role models to approach. One participant explained that because of a centralised decision-making policy within the organisation, she was somewhat restricted so far as contribution to meaningful decisions; decisions that presumably involved problem solving. Experience was nominated as a feature of the problem-solving ability. One participant split the experience into two with one being the ability to solve monetary problems and the other the ability to effectively deal with customers. Overall, the majority of participants rated themselves highly for their ability to problem solve while in a work capacity so this suggested that self-confidence in this area was above average

Goal-meeting ability. Participant perceptions of their ability to meet goals set within the work environment were varied. This was reflected in the fact that ratings ranged from three's to a five with part-time studies being nominated as the major catalyst for participants not meeting goals. These studies were seen as interfering with tasks upon which goals were set and were particularly bothersome during examination periods. While one participant saw goal achievement as being very much mood dependent, another split hers into revenue and non-revenue goal achievements. The participant who rated herself the highest saw herself as going beyond meeting the set goals during the course of everyday work tasks. Goal meeting then appeared to be the most diversified of the three practices that for the purposes of this study, fed into self-efficacy.

In a paper written by Lunenburg (2011) on self-efficacy in the workplace, it was suggested that organisations can actively play a role in higher performance by encouraging employees to set higher performance goals. This is especially true for those employees who are perceived to possess a high level of self-efficacy. Considering the diversified responses to goal meeting by participants in Study 3, it may be in the best interests of both the organisation and the employee to further discuss set goals especially in light of how to overcome those hurdles that hamper employees' abilities to achieve those goals. For example, how better could organisations support employees who are undertaking further study?

Work-place engagement. The second part of Study 3 related to participant engagement in the workplace. Selected questions were taken from Utrecht's Work

Engagement Scale-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006), an instrument that has been identified as being unbiased in measuring work engagement for different racial groups. Participants rated themselves on a scale of zero to six in this section with zero being never enthusiastic and six representing always enthusiastic. As defined by Schaufeli et al., (2006, p.702), work engagement is, “a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption”. More specifically, engagement is an affective-cognitive state and vigour that encompasses both mental resilience and high levels of energy and persistence even when facing difficulties. Dedication relates to enthusiasm, challenge and pride amongst other characteristics and represents a strong involvement in work (Schaufeli et al., 2006). For the purpose of this study, specific facets of work engagement are discussed in detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Enthusiasm to go to work. Enthusiasm to go to work was the first element to be gauged in the second section of the interviews. As depicted by participants, the more positive forms of this enthusiasm emanated from arriving early for their work day, being constantly engaged, challenged and motivated throughout the work day, and experiencing a family feel in the work environment. Negative or enthusiasm killers were nominated as being lack of direction from managers leading to confusion in carrying out work tasks and lack of trust from management. As such the family feel to the organisation was absent. Distance from home to work, then onto college and back home at the end of a long day also played a part in a perceived decrease of enthusiasm. Overall, managers can be seen to have a substantial impact on participant responses to this particular question.

Commitment to tasks. Commitment to tasks formed part of the workplace engagement questions. As was expected, participants equated commitment to extending their work day through necessity to complete a given task, moving break times for similar reasons and simultaneously undertaking both work and college commitments. Sometimes, commitment waned due to distractions caused by unexpected tasks during the working day. One participant admitted to there being a variation in the level of her commitment. When work was not so busy, she would leave directly at the end of her shift. Two participants once again mentioned the interference of extra study in the evenings as sometimes prohibiting them from fully committing to the tasks at hand. A broader view that of being committed to not just immediate everyday tasks but to the corporate culture in general, was also taken by one of the participants. As such, commitment can be said to have been closely aligned with engagement but with the added feature of depth. It could be argued however that the waning

of commitment when participants perceived they were overloaded did not equate to persistence identified as a characteristic of engagement.

General dedication to work. General dedication to work formed the final question in the section on engagement in the workplace. The majority of participants rated themselves very highly for this section offering reasons for the dedication such as its link to success, organisational support, favourable work practices, and the opportunity to learn new things in the workplace. According to the description of dedication given by Schaufeli et al., (2006) engagement is an essential element of dedication, so it is not surprising that the majority of participants rated themselves well for this question. Dedication was also linked to having an emotional attachment to work projects and to experiencing enjoyment of hard work. Participants who rated themselves lower on dedication once again raised the issue of extra pressure put on them through additional studies. This pressure prohibited them from fully engaging in workplace tasks. Overall, additional study was identified frequently as a catalyst for not being able to fully engage in the workplace.

Self-efficacy effects. In order to reveal more about professional self-efficacy and its relationship to work engagement, the third section of the interviews again comprised questions related to work engagement in general, enthusiasm within the workplace and commitment to work. Participants were specifically asked whether they perceived a link between self-efficacy and the three previously-mentioned elements.

In a 2012 study of 161 public certified accountants in Turkey, Yakin and Erdil investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement and the effects of these elements on job satisfaction. Although it could be argued that the study was limited to accountants, a positive correlation was found between the factors. Specifically, results of the regression analysis implied that emotional, physical and cognitive work engagement are related to self-confidence and focussed effort. A later study in Norway on teacher self-efficacy and perceived autonomy looked at teacher engagement, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion (E. Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Some 2569 teachers in elementary and middle school took part in the study. Results showed that self-efficacy and autonomy when separately analysed were positively associated with teachers' engagement and job satisfaction (E. Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). The expectation for results of this section of Study 3 then would be definitive links between self-efficacy and work engagement, dedication including enthusiasm and work commitment. The following results exemplify those links and do much to authenticate previous studies. This time however in a Middle Eastern context.

Work engagement. All but one participant linked self-confidence to work engagement. They also linked work engagement and self-confidence, and offered logical examples as justification. An explanation of the relationship between self-confidence and work engagement was given by one participant in the form of a cycle whereby self-confidence led to greater engagement. In this instance it was with customers which was subsequently recognised and rewarded by management. This increased the self-belief and confidence of the participant. Another participant saw engagement as being contingent on those around you in the workplace. If colleagues were positive then there would be more engagement but if not, engagement would be stifled. Being proactive in the workplace was also equated with engagement.

The one participant who did not equate engagement with self-confidence had a very legitimate reason for so doing. She was a new graduate so felt as though at this point in time, engagement did not necessarily mean an increase in self-confidence since she was learning much new information on a daily basis. She admitted to being passionate, enthusiastic and motivated but as noted, stopped short of admitting to a causal relationship between the two elements.

Enthusiasm. As was the case with engagement, all but one of the participants identified a positive correlation between self-efficacy and enthusiasm. Enthusiasm was seen to be triggered by variety in everyday work tasks, being able to handle pressure and being familiar with work processes and thereby able to carry them out at an acceptable level. By default, being energetically in control of these led to an increase in self-confidence. Recognition by the organisation for a job well done also fed into enthusiasm but the reverse of this was also true; enthusiasm can just as easily be dampened by an organisation. In contrast, the one participant who did not see a direct link explained it by adamantly stating that she simply had to be confident in performing her work duties each day at work whether she did this enthusiastically or not. Confidence in her eyes, came as a default part of the job. She did however concede that the fact that the organisation trusted her with important work was a cause for a rise in her self-confidence.

Commitment to work. Except for two, who could see little or no link, participants identified a positive relationship between self-efficacy and commitment to work. Commitment with these two participants came from being obliged, in their minds, to complete a task or duty without necessarily acknowledging self-confidence as a motivator. One of the two saw the correlation between commitment and enthusiasm much clearer, but failed to link commitment to self-confidence.

Commitment like other elements in the study, came in various forms. These ranged from being committed to inform the larger population of the organisational culture in general and completing set tasks on time which was identified as leading to high self-confidence. Self-confidence was seen by one participant as a trigger for working harder and was subsequently construed as commitment.

General dedication to work. Dedication was identified by participants as engagement, enthusiasm and commitment. The link between dedication and self-efficacy was once more seen by four of the six participants. Other characteristics of dedication included achievement in the form of added value to a department, and a tool to assist in performing everyday work tasks. It was thought by one participant that dedication increased when more challenging tasks were set. More responsibility and trust were seen to increase self-confidence.

Two participants argued that dedication was by default, a major attribute that each employee should possess when joining an organisation. No link between dedication and self-confidence was identified.

Specific experiential sources of self-efficacy. The fourth section of the interview focused on career decisions related to experiences, on important people and role models in participant lives and the effects they have had on them to this point in their career. These are identified below as specific experiential sources. Questions for the section sought to identify the primary experiential sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations relative to career exploration and decision-making activities and were based on those used in a study by Lent et al., (2017). Lent's study was conducted with 324 undergraduates 67% of whom were women, enrolled in psychology courses at a mid-Atlantic university.

Specific experiential sources used in Study 3 then included personal mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning. In Study 2, verbal persuasion results showed a correlation ($r = .406$) with self-efficacy. Unusually however, very low levels of correlation between self-efficacy and personal mastery ($r = .178$) and self-efficacy and vicarious learning ($r = .158$) were revealed. This section of Study 3 questions then sought to further explore this abnormality to see if more in-depth explanations could be found.

Personal mastery.

Satisfaction with career decisions. Over half of the participants, four out of six, expressed strong agreement when asked about how satisfied they were with career decisions they had made to date. Reasons given for this apparent satisfaction were the decision to pursue further studies sometimes at the expense of retaining the job, accepting a position in a

company straight after completing high school, and being a risk-taker when accepting a position that did not match the area of the participant's expertise. Another participant stressed that she had gone against her family's wishes to pursue her interests but felt satisfied with the result. One participant currently not satisfied with her career explained she was not challenged in the workplace after 2.5 years with the same organisation and that she was unsure of her future direction. In summary, the majority of participants were satisfied with career choices in the private sector.

Relationship between past successes and future career goals. All participants could identify a relationship between their past successes and future career goals and all of these were positive in nature. Master's degrees, first promotions and previous experience in general including being a recipient of awards, all contributed in participants' minds to being seen as a success; success that boded well for future careers. Hindsight in the form of realisation as to how good duties had been performed in the past was also mentioned as was an internship to the United States. Both spurred on the participants concerned to have confidence in their future careers. A perceived failure by one participant, that of choosing the wrong course to study overseas, was turned into a positive as the participant professed to now have a clear understanding of what she didn't want to do in the future.

All in all then, these results would suggest that the majority of participants were satisfied with the career decisions they had made to this point in time; decisions related to their careers in the private sector in Dubai. Self-efficacy, positive in nature, appeared to be linked to past successes and in this case, was present in all participants.

Verbal persuasion.

Important others. Participants were next asked to identify important others in their careers and to judge how these others would rate them on career decisions and how they could assist the participant with career goals. The rating was done on a scale of one to five with one being the lowest or most dis-satisfied rating and five being the highest or most satisfied rating.

Good career decisions and actioning those decisions. Significant others so far as participants were concerned were nominated as work colleagues, family, with specific members such as mothers and sisters being identified, and friends. Only two of the six participants believed important others would rate them a five on their ability to make good career decisions. The remaining participants rated themselves between three and four. In general, it was work colleagues and families who saw the majority of participants making good decisions. Sometimes however, families did not, especially when decisions made by a

participant went against their wishes. This usually happened in the area of initial career choice.

As regards putting the career decisions into action, Sara and Samira who rated themselves the lowest in career decisions were now able to reverse that rating by stating that important others had resigned themselves to the fact over the years that perhaps they had made an error in judgement. The families now conceded that participants had done well in their chosen field. For other participants, actioning of decisions ratings was in line with the original decision-making ratings.

Assistance with important career goals. Participants were then asked to judge of what assistance important others may be with regards to them reaching future career goals. All participants acknowledged that important others would in some way influence them in reaching these goals. Practices such as using colleagues, both former and current, for influence and to assist in future research were cited. However, participants anticipated by far the greatest assistance would come from family members in the form of emotional and monetary assistance. Family members were seen to be wiser and more experienced with similar work ethics to the participants. It was also seen as essential to get family approval for future goals. Two participants made a point of mentioning this much-needed approval. One participant in particular singled out her mother as giving her essential emotional support. Her brother on the other hand provided the financial support. And in reverse, the final participant gave credit to her family for her working hard to prove to them that her career choice and future goals were right for her.

These ratings suggest an awareness by participants on the influence families play in their careers; an influence not always conceded to by participants as positive in their quest to establish a career in a particular field, but one that is powerful nevertheless. In addition, participants whose families disapproved of their career choice did not appear to suffer a fall in their self-efficacy. In fact it acted as a catalyst motivating them to work even harder to prove their point.

Vicarious learning.

Role models influence – important career decisions. The fact that only one of the six participants had a current role model, a model that was generic in nature rather than one personally known to the participant, was somewhat unexpected although in keeping with what had been found in Study 2. This role model was identified as anyone who was a risk-taker. However, three of six participants identified former managers as being role models to them in the past. Another identified her father, although this was only after being probed a

little more on the nature of her father's entrepreneurship existence. Ways in which role models were remembered positively by participants included being listened to by the manager and being encouraged to discuss future plans, being encouraged to stick with the company as long as possible in order to build credibility, and being able to witness the role model's rise through the ranks to manager.

Choosing academic majors and career paths. Again in relation to participants being influenced by role models on academic majors and career paths, only three replied in the affirmative. These three participants cited lecturers, colleagues and ex-managers as offering some form of assistance usually in the form of encouragement. The managers in particular encouraged participants to pursue additional studies and the lecturers encouraged them to pursue specific studies. Again the fact that only half the participants acknowledged this advice is unexpected in relation to former studies but not in relation to the results of the quantitative Study 2. Perhaps along with a misunderstanding of the question—this appeared to be contradicted in a later part of the interview—either participants or their families had already marked them out for a particular career path.

Reliance on others when making decisions. When asked who they relied on when making decisions, two of the six participants were adamant that ultimately they relied on themselves for the final call. Justification for this self-reliance came in the form of wanting to take full responsibility for decisions, whether right or wrong, and in the form of an acknowledgement of being very self-opinionated and always following this through. The remaining participants nominated family as being those they would rely on with one adding work colleagues. One participant differentiated between decisions that might affect the family saying she would, under those circumstances, involve them. In this instance, a mother and sister were tagged. Again, the importance of family influence in this culture is highlighted.

Assistance with choosing future goals. Finally, participants were asked about the role that might be played by others in assisting them with future goals. Two of the participants related their future success to inspiration gained from international (distal) role models for example, the owner of Zara and artistic people in general. The remaining participants specifically nominated former managers and colleagues explaining that areas they might assist them in included training, advising, sharing their experience and putting in a favourable word when it was needed.

Sources of self-efficacy and relationship to goal setting. The final section of Study 3 posed interview questions related to levels of self-efficacy and goal setting. Questions

covered goals in relation to further education, promotion, changing organisations and careers, and owning a business and emanated from the themes identified in Study 1. Five of the six participants were either currently studying or had plans for study in the future for either a master's or a doctorate. The same five were also hoping for a promotion once they had completed their studies. Three participants mentioned the likelihood of them changing organisations especially if the promised promotion upon completion of their studies was not forthcoming. With regard to starting their own business in the future, four participants had plans that included opening a restaurant, a beauty business, a gym, and becoming an official land lady.

These responses generally showed a challenging level of effort would be required by participants as opening a successful business in the UAE in particular is highly competitive in nature. All goals then could be considered as being set by employees whose self-efficacy and outcome expectations standards were high—goals that as defined by Lent et al., (2017), represent participants' intentions to perform behaviours identified through outcome expectations.

CHAPTER 7: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mixed methods research according to Creswell et al., (2011) demands rigorous quantitative research that assesses magnitude and frequency of constructs in addition to rigorous qualitative research the aim of which is to explore the meaning and understanding of the constructs. In this instance, two sets of in-depth structured interviews together with an online quantitative survey were used to specifically explore the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting belonging to the SCCT (Lent, 2005). Lent (2005) reminds us that measures of social cognitive research, dynamic in nature, need to be tailored to a specific domain and offer insight into how people change, regulate and develop their own behaviour.

The research was primarily aimed to assess the fit of the SCCT to a Middle-Eastern context through exploring what a career path might look like in the eyes of female Emirati graduates working in the private sector in Dubai. What then was the range of the SCCT's applicability? Data were collected over a period of 18 months starting with six in-depth interviews (Study 1) followed 9 months later by an on-line quantitative study involving 41 participants (Study 2) and then concluded with a further six in-depth interviews (Study 3) that clarified normalities and investigated abnormalities arising from Study 2 results. Specific research questions that were asked were:

- What role do individual beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting) play in shaping career decisions?
- What aspects of the environment assist and inhibit career-making decisions?
- What other life roles affect career decisions?

Results

Self-efficacy. Study 1 teased out dominant patterns that were representative of the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting. These patterns influenced the questions used in Study 2. Evidence of both content self-efficacy, the ability to be able to perform tasks in a specific domain, and coping self-efficacy, the belief of being able to overcome domain-specific obstacles, were present in all three studies. In Study 1, they could be found under the achievement theme and in Studies 2 and 3 in responses to items from the OSES and VOES and in responses to questions in the first section of the interview respectively. Specific examples of actions that boosted content self-efficacy were recognition from colleagues and senior management for tasks well done (Study 1) and exceeding manager expectations and being given extra responsibilities with VIP customers (Study 3).

These examples were seen as similar to those responses making up the Verbal Persuasion construct of the SSEOE scale of Study 2, the only construct that correlated with opening up a business in future.

Problem solving, or in the case of Study 1 the belief of being able to overcome career-related obstacles, were identified in the 'career challenging' code extracts of the achievement theme covering such examples as coping with a work/home life balance, extra work loads and self-pressure to perform in the workplace. In Study 3, experience was nominated as a tool to cope with any problems that may occur in the workplace. An example of a problem was dealing with demanding customers. Overall, four of the six participants rated themselves either four or five for their ability to problem solve while in a work capacity so this suggested that self-confidence in this area was above average. In Study 2, problem solving ability was identified through items on the OSES and indirectly through items on the SSEOE scale an example of which was how good a job they had done of weighing the positives and negatives of different options when having had to make career-related decisions. Because this was a single item on the scale, it is difficult to say what individual responses were. The analysis of data generated from items on the OSES scale, showed the mean score to be 4.22 (SD = 0.55) which was considerably above the mid-point of the five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This suggested that overall, participants perceived themselves as confident in relation to solving problems, using past experiences to assist their career and meeting goals in the workplace.

Other sources of self-efficacy. Key influences on self-efficacy and subsequent career paths in Study 1 were identified as family with a specific reference to a mother, managers, and to a lesser extent, friends. In Studies 2 and 3, influences otherwise known as sources of self-efficacy, were specifically nominated as important others and role models. Important others according to responses to Study 3 interviews included work colleagues, family, with specific members such as mothers and sisters again being identified, and friends. Role models were nominated as managers, mostly from past organisations, family members and well-known international entrepreneurs. These were examples of proximal and distal influences. In most instances, participants were hesitant in identifying and nominating a role model and the majority of those who did, nominated an Emirati. This could further explain why there was little correlation between vicarious learning and the goals of further study, getting a promotion, and opening a business in Study 2 responses. In the private sector in particular, a sector made up predominantly of ex-patriot employees, there is a shortage of local role models.

The results of Study 3 reflected a considerable drop in self-efficacy when participants were asked how important others would rate them on career decisions including putting the decisions into action to date. Only two gave themselves a full rating. The remainder rated themselves between a three and a four which was contradictory to how they had rated themselves regarding feeling confident about their own career decisions. Work colleagues and families backed participant career decisions although families sometimes objected to initial career choices. Once made however, there was less resistance and more support emotionally and financially from the family.

In Study 2, mean scores for the full SSEOE scale were 4.15 (SD=0.65) pointing to an agreement by participants that important others approved of their career decisions and subsequent actioning of these decisions.

Work place engagement. Study 2 unexpectedly revealed little correlation between the OSES and the UWES and its subscales of personal mastery and vicarious learning—verbal persuasion was the exception. Participants' sense of confidence (efficacy) appeared unrelated to engagement in their profession. As a result, participants in Study 3 were specifically asked to consider the links between self-efficacy and engagement, enthusiasm and commitment within the parameters of everyday work tasks. All except one participant recognised a link between self-confidence and engagement seeing the process as cyclical in nature; high self-confidence lead to more engagement which in turn fed back into self-confidence. Again with the exception of one participant who saw enthusiasm as an automatic default requirement of any job, all saw self-confidence as enhancing enthusiasm, with the reverse also being true.

As far as commitment was concerned, two participants failed to see the link to self-confidence, again seeing commitment as an automatic part of the job but not necessarily as enhancing self-confidence. The same applied for two participants when it came to dedication. In their minds it was an attribute all employees should possess when joining an organisation but one that did not necessarily enhance self-confidence.

Outcome expectations. Outcome expectations with types such as anticipated social, material and self-evaluative, were measured through direct interview questions in Studies 1 and 3 and predominantly through items of the VOES in Study 2. Interviews revealed a mix of both positive and negative expected career outcomes. Positive outcomes included being rewarded for additional study, changing to a more challenging workplace and living in a different and presumably more luxurious home environment. Those with a negative connotation included being judged by society for pursuing career over marriage and for those married, a struggle to maintain a work/home life balance and the pressure and hard work

involved in pursuing a career. Responses to Study 3 revealed it was expected that additional study, dedication and engagement in everyday work tasks would ultimately lead to promotion in the workplace. Results from items on the VOES in Study 2 indicated a mean score of 3.55 (SD=0.426) suggesting that on the whole, participants anticipated positive outcomes in relation to their careers.

Lent, Brown and Hackett (as cited in Brown, 2002) have alluded to the fact that learning experiences that inform outcome expectations are similar to those that inform self-efficacy. The experiences are likely to also be influenced by self-efficacy when outcomes are regulated by the performance quality. These associations were seen in the results of Study 2 where there was a high correlation between the SSEOE scale and its subscales of personal mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious learning and the VOES – $r(41) = .766, p = <.001$.

Goal setting. Study 1 responses in relation to goal setting predominantly focussed on new opportunities in the world of work. This could be explained by the fact that four out of five participants were coming to the end of their bachelor degrees. Some had ambitions to continue in the same industry but others were determined to utilise skills and experiences acquired from their major studies and switch fields. Goals now appeared to be more focussed on finding the right position for the newly acquired skills and in some cases this equated to being repositioned within their current organisation. Focus here was not necessarily on an initial higher salary. Additional study in a different area was also sought by one participant because she predicted there would be much demand for that major, in this instance Quality, in the future. Goals therefore matched participants' relatively high levels of self-efficacy and career expectations detected in the previous sections. It was presumed by participants that dedication and hard work were requirements in reaching all goals.

The relatively low correlation between the future goals of further education, promotion, changing organisations and careers and the OSES scale was in contrast to the goal of opening a business in Study 2. Predictions as to why this was so have been offered in the discussion session.

In Study 3 participant perceptions of their ability to meet goals related to the work environment were varied. Self-ratings ranged from threes to a five. Part-time study became the catalyst in not being able to meet work goals as the majority of the six participants were working full-time and studying part-time. Long-term goals mentioned related to further education, promotion and owning a business. Changing organisations was also identified by participants as a future goal. Again these goals were reflective of the perceived high self-efficacy and expectations set by participants in the previous section. Study 3 participants also

identified a positive relationship between their past successes and future career goals, a relationship that pointed once more to a healthy self-efficacy.

Study Summary

The research comprising three parts provided specific instances of the three constructs of the SCCT (Lent, 2005)—self-efficacy and its two forms of content and coping, outcome expectations and the three forms of social, material and self-evaluative and goal setting. Foremost in the researcher's mind was the need for domain specificity as it is one of the hallmarks of cognitive assessment. Other cognitive assessment rules such as indexing self-efficacy as a participant's perceived capability to perform a given task, not merely abstract knowledge about how to do it as identified by Lent and Brown (2006), were adhered to in items selected for each of the studies. Data comprising female graduate perceptions of working in the private sector in Dubai were collected and analysed in an endeavour to better understand the components of a career path within the context of the Middle East. To better understand this context, major influences on careers were also investigated, influences that ultimately reflected the culture of the wider society. The importance of the role of family was emphasised throughout, a role that was both supportive and sometimes initially restrictive in nature with regards to careers. However, contrary to findings in other studies (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012; Goby & Erogul, 2011; Williams, Wallis & Williams, 2013), once participants accessed the private sector and proved their worth, their careers did not appear to be restrained. In fact family members showed support for their choices and other activities such as additional studies that may further enhance future careers.

In general, the generic model of the SCCT was found to fit the context of the Middle East. Scales that were utilised in Study 2 to test self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting along with work engagement generally appeared to measure these constructs in a valid way. However those unexpected results from Study 2, the fact that self-efficacy did not appear to be directly related to work engagement and the fact that only verbal persuasion on the SSEOE sub-scale correlated with business goals, suggested that further investigation as to the fit of these scales in this particular context was warranted. Study 3 results also showed a distinct lack of role models especially local, from which participants drew inspiration. BarNir, Watsons and Hutchins (as cited in Austin & Nauta, 2016) identified the importance of exposure for women to entrepreneurial role models especially for those wishing to start up their own businesses.

Implications

The study has shed more light on the career paths of female Emirati graduates working in the private sector in Dubai. Because the majority of graduates, in particular female graduates, predominantly choose to work in the public sector, details of a private sector career have remained relatively unknown. As a result of this research, it can be observed that females working in the private sector experience similar reactions to everyday work situations. In this case it was via the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting and these reactions matched those previously studied in a western environment using these same constructs of the SCCT. A strong relationship was found between the three concepts especially noticeable in data gathered from the interviews of Studies 1 and 3. This translated into those participants that appeared to have high self-efficacy also setting challenging expectations and goals almost by default and expecting them to come to fruition in the future but not without sacrifice and hard work.

Participants appeared to be free to pursue a career in the private sector and had similar hopes and aspirations for the future to those in a western environment. Of particular interest was the prevalence of those aiming to set up a business in the future which was no doubt influenced by the encouragement for SME's shown through Government initiatives in the UAE. Also of value to the participants in regards to their careers were the predominantly positive influences reflecting a high level of encouragement. These influences came from important others and role models and included managers, family and friends. Within the ever-changing society that makes up the UAE, it has come to be accepted and expected that women will contribute substantially to the economy in the future as more and more obtain their educational degrees and venture out into the workforce.

Private sector organisations are obliged to abide by strict new laws regarding the employment of local Emiratis that were put into place by the UAE government in 2018 (Samir, 2018; UAE Government, 2018). As such, these organisations would benefit from in-house research, either formally or informally, and through performance appraisals that include some of the broader variables covered in this study—self-efficacy, expectations and goals. This would serve to better understand employee motivations and to better support their needs. It is more common these days to see fresh graduate programs offered to new recruits for the first year of employment. These programs operate best when run by locals and can include for example job rotations and other skill-enhancing courses that are mandatory for those new joiners. As acknowledged in two previous studies (Omeira, 2010; Sidani, 2010), lack of training and work experience together with lack of training in more

specialised areas such as administration and finance can make joining an organisation a daunting prospect for fresh graduates.

The mixed-methods research approach used in this study has succeeded in its overall aim to take a topic of interest, research it via a well-known model and arrive at conclusions that may not have been as detailed had the study been either purely qualitative or quantitative in nature. The initial round of interviews enabled the researcher to measure the general fit of the SCCT and then to add specific questions to the quantitative on-line survey to better suit the context of the study. Data from the final round of interviews clarified and enriched that gathered from the on-line study but also left some unexplained data that may well provide a context for future study.

Limitations and Recommendations

The distinct correlation between the three constructs of the SCCT as tested in this study suggested the model was suitable for future use in the region for qualitative type studies. However, because of the relatively small sample size for the quantitative Study 2 with 41 participants out of 1000 contacted via a second party, caution should be used in automatically applying results to the general population of those female graduates working in the private sector. On the one hand it could be argued that direct contact with potential participants may have led to a greater response rate, but given restrictions placed by the organisation whose database was used, this was unavoidable. Access to a larger, wider population usually comes through databases in today's electronic age. To ensure a greater response rate to future research done in the UAE, more use could be made of the various organisations especially those run specifically for women to support women in business, to recruit potential participants. Very often these organisations' memberships are open to all females in the community so networking events could be an ideal time to not only meet potential participants but to also explore the possibility of access to databases containing potential participants.

Caution should also be used when measuring the constructs in quantitative studies with scales being carefully chosen to reflect study intentions. In particular, those items on the UWES that endeavoured to differentiate the constructs of vigour, dedication and absorption and how these may be related to self-efficacy. The possibility of items being confusing to participants because of the similarity in meaning even though they were translated and checked by two independent fluent Arabic speakers especially needs to be considered when English is not the first language of the participants.

It should be noted that while the research was done with the belief that the SCCT model was the best lens with which to view a female career in the private sector in Dubai, other models may well have turned up different data. That is not to say that this model did not accurately portray some of the many elements that characterise a career whether it be in the private or public sector or in a western or middle-eastern context. The results have conclusively shown that all collected data go some way towards painting a picture of what in the mainstream constitutes a career. It is incumbent on critics to prove otherwise.

Finally, this research was conducted by a single researcher and as such, there is always the risk that data analysis could be limited to the researcher's inherent frame of reference. As such it was essential that the researcher understood the terms reflexivity and positionality and consciously applied techniques throughout the study to adequately negate any biases that may have tainted the analysis and subsequent findings. Reflexivity as defined by O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) involves being consciously aware of cognitive and emotional filters that emanate from experiences and worldviews.

Future Research

Because of the limited amount of research that has been done on the private sector in the UAE, there is a wide scope for topics related to careers in this sector to be examined. However, researchers must proceed with caution and ensure all permissions have been granted from respective authorities because of the relatively sensitive nature of gathering and sharing information in this part of the world. Topics emanating from this research could be:

Engagement in the workplace. Because this research raised unexpected results especially with regard to Study 2, further exploration of the relationship between self-efficacy and vigour and self-efficacy and absorption in particular could be undertaken. Both sets of results could then be examined in relation to career enhancement.

The effects of role models. Unexpectedly, Study 2 results showed little correlation between opening a business and vicarious learning suggesting that either important others or role models do not greatly influence self-efficacy in the work environment. Even though role models were nominated by the majority of Study 3 participants, it was not without a push that they did so. In particular, local role models need to be further investigated; who are they, what makes them a role model and how do they inadvertently enhance careers? Another topic for role models would be a comparison of a local role model to that of an ex-patriot role model.

Managerial influence on female Emirati career paths. As was noted throughout Study 1 and Study 2, workplace managers have an important impact on self-efficacy,

engagement, outcome expectations and career goals. To what extent do they influence an Emirati career given the fact that many managers are ex-patriots in the private sector? Areas such as the need to set higher performance goals and to set transparent promotion guidelines could be considered.

Managerial roles in boosting self-efficacy. Lunenberg (2011) studied self-efficacy in the workplace and acknowledged possible implications for motivation and performance. What then are managers' obligations to set challenging assignments to boost self-confidence and to convince employees of their ability to succeed?

Influences on Emirati male and female careers in the private sector. Because this study was from the perspective of female graduates, it would be informative to now compare influences on male and female careers in the private sector. This time, an initial quantitative study would be advised with focus groups suggested for a follow-up qualitative study.

Measuring the benefits of additional study and career advancement. Additional study was perceived many times in Study 3 as the catalyst in participants not being able to properly fulfil their workplace goals. It would be insightful to study this in more depth from the perspective of those currently studying and from those who have completed their studies and are now seeing the benefits or non-benefits.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The three studies undertaken in this mixed methods approach enabled observation of the underlying principle of social cognitive research; how people change, regulate and develop their own behaviour in the workplace domain. Throughout the quantitative and qualitative studies, participant responses reflected healthy self-concepts along with the ability to set and reach what could be considered challenging career goals, all the while with a realistic outlook on future outcomes. They displayed persistence to persevere with sometime obstacles and were unafraid to stand up for what they believed they were owed not just from hard work and application to everyday work tasks, but from life in general. They were also willing to attribute their career success to this point in time to others such as family, friends and respected role models, while at the same time taking responsibility for their own decisions.

All of these features support one of the principle hypotheses of the SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996) that people consider others and environmental conditions when constructing their own experiences, experiences that equate to career development via the constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goal setting. They also reflect features of what Forstenlechner and Baruch (2013) in their study that investigated the impact of cultural and historical peculiarities of the UAE label a *protean career*, a career whereby the emphasis to plan, manage and progress is on the individual rather than the organisation. This study may well provide a glimpse, albeit it small, of what a future Emirati private sector employee looks like. It is to be hoped.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Notes

Interview 1 - Salma: (11/12/2015)

27 year old who worked for 8 years in 2 different private insurance companies before switching to Government last year. Single and lives at home with family. Very confident in her own abilities and has a very good grasp/insight of people and how the world works in general. Ex-student that will graduate in February 2016. I worked with her in the capacity of teacher for her final year of college – Year 4. She majored in HR and was top of her evening class. She is particularly outspoken about males – telling off her brother for smoking and “smelling” and not holding male teachers in very high regard. Her perception of these teachers was very close to how I perceived them although of course I did not comment on this at all over the 2 semesters. It was interesting that one of the highlights of her career mentioned in the interview was the fact that when she left her first insurance position, the manager, that refused to promote her, then hired 3 males to replace her. **(Oman Insurance 2009 – 2014)**

Interview 2 - Sumaya: (17/12/2015)

28 year old who worked for 8 years in 2 different private banks before switching to Government 2 years ago. Married with a child delivered in February 2015. Lives with husband at her mother’s home. She is very outspoken and will generally tell it how it is. If she is interested in your course she will work hard. If she isn’t, she has the tendency to potentially cause grief. I worked with her in Year 2 for one semester and then again in Year 4 for 2 semesters. She worked well for me and when she focussed, turned in some very good results. She has certainly changed since marrying and having a baby. She told me after the interview that she has softened as a person and thinks more carefully now before saying and doing things. She attributed this to her baby. She also draws great support from her mother she is living in her mother’s house with her husband. Her mother will go with them when they move to Abu Dhabi. She also told me she will return to private enterprise when she moves to Abu Dhabi. Her husband knows people in the banking sector so she will update her CV, pass it to him and get him to assist her in her next position. This is called “wasta” in the GCC. **(Emirates Bank (2006 – 2008) and then Commercial Bank International (2009 – 2012))**

Interview 3 - Dana: (23/12/2015)

23 year old who appears much more mature. She spent 3 years in Canada on a scholarship and loved it. She set up flat with other students - this is most unusual for a female Emirati much less one of such a young age since she went to Canada at 17. She had a visit from her mother whilst there. She is from a mixed marriage. She told me later how after failing the nano-engineering course in Canada, that she really began to doubt herself and thought herself dumb rather than what school grades from the UAE had reflected – that of being a top student and being awarded a Government scholarship to go study in Canada. I worked with her this year as a Year 2 student. She was way ahead of the rest of the class scoring full marks for every exam she sat. She is a dream student in every way with a focus that is rarely seen.

Interview 4 - Fatma: (14/01/2016)

33 year old, married with one child and expecting a second in 4 months. She spent one year in Emirates International Bank, 2 years in Emirates Airlines and 5.5 years in Mashreq Bank and has now been 4 years in a Government position. She is planning to get out of the government sector and go back into the private sector – most likely banking.

Interview 5 - Amina: (21/01/2016)

30 year old, single, who has returned to the government sector after some 8 years in the private sector working for Mashreq Bank. She has been 8 months in her current position of faculty of business and has no intention, at this stage of returning to the private sector as teaching is all she has ever wanted to do. She told me later that when she completed her master's she also went to a counsellor who indicated that teaching came up on her self-assessments as a possible career. When she thought back to her childhood, she remembers having dreams about teaching. She intends to pursue a Doctorate as and when the time is right.

Step 1 before coding (Braun & Clarke p. 205)

1. How does a participant make sense of their experiences?
2. Why might they be making sense of their experiences in this way (and not another way)?
3. In what different ways do they make sense of the topic discussed?
4. How 'common-sense' is their story?

5. How would I feel if I were in a similar situation? (different from or similar to how the participant feels and why?)
6. What assumptions do they make in talking about the world?
7. What kind of world is 'revealed' through their account?

During coding for GT (to stay focused on action and processes in the data) – p.

216

Use gerunds – e.g. fat shaming or career building/planning

1. What process/es are at issue here? How can I define it?
2. How do the research participants act while involved in this process?
3. What are the consequences of this process?

APPENDIX B
Ethical Clearance – HCT



Monday, November 09, 2015

Pamela Hawkswell
Dubai Women's College
Dubai - UAE

Dear Pamela

After having reviewed your application, the Research Committee has decided to give you approval to conduct your research at HCT Dubai. The Committee believes that your research has been put well together and is very well thought. Your topic is very valuable to the workforce in the country and teaching and learning in the HCT. We look forward to sharing your findings that will have an impact on teaching and learning.

Sincerely

Ghassoub Mustafa

Head of Research Committee at HCT Dubai

APPENDIX C

Ethical Clearance – USQ

OFFICE OF RESEARCH
 Human Research Ethics Committee
 PHONE +61 7 4631 2690| FAX +61 7 4631 5555
 EMAIL ethics@usq.edu.au



2 December 2015

Ms Pamela Hawkswell

Dear Pamela

The USQ Human Research Ethics Committee has recently reviewed your responses to the conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the project outlined below. Your proposal is now deemed to meet the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethical approval has been granted.

Approval No.	H15REA252
Project Title	The career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai
Approval date	1 December 2015
Expiry date	1 December 2018
HREC Decision	Approved

The standard conditions of this approval are:

- (a) conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
- (b) advise (email: ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
- (c) make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
- (d) provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
- (e) provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
- (f) advise in writing if the project has been discontinued.

For (c) to (e) forms are available on the USQ ethics website:
<http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethicsbio/human>

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National*

APPENDIX D**PIS – Study 1**

University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information Sheet for USQ Research Project

Study title: The Career Paths of Female Emirati Graduates in the Private Sector in Dubai

Introduction:

I am inviting you to take part in research being conducted for my Doctorate of Education through the University of Southern Queensland in Australia. I will explain details of the research and then you will have the opportunity to decide if you would like to participate. Please read the following information carefully and ask if there is anything you are not clear about.

The purpose of the study:

The purpose of the study is to explore the career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai. When the study is completed, I hope to have a better understanding of how female Emiratis in the private sector in Dubai make sense of their careers. The study will take place over a period of 3 – 6 months.

Why have you been chosen?

You have been chosen as a potential participant because I believe your work background and experience will enable you to share valuable information. This information will contribute towards building a picture of career paths in the private sector.

Do you have to take part?

It is your decision as to whether or not you take part in this research. If you decide to, you will keep this information sheet and will sign a consent form. You will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. You will in no way be adversely affected by withdrawing from the study. It will have no adverse impacts on your normal relationship with your college or teacher.

What do you have to do if you take part?

Your involvement will mean doing an interview and then possibly completing an online questionnaire at a later date. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will be arranged at a time and place to suit us both. You will be asked in-depth questions during the interview so I can build up an accurate picture of your career path. With your permission I will tape the interview to make sure I get down all details of your responses. I will then ask you at a later date to clarify points in the transcript. Five participants will undertake the interview at times convenient to each.

The online questionnaire should take you no longer than 20 minutes to complete and will be a series of open and closed questions related to your work where you will be asked to share your experience of the private sector. I am hoping to recruit around 200 participants for this questionnaire and will be looking for general patterns in private sector career paths.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

I am not going to ask you any questions that may embarrass you in any way but you are free to decline answering any in the interview and in the questionnaire should you feel they don't apply to you. There may be a little inconvenience to you regarding time taken to do the interview, read the transcript and possibly complete the questionnaire. Alternatively you have the option of withdrawing from the study at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct benefit for you if you participate in the study apart from a tea, coffee or soft drink during the interview. However, the information you provide will help to build a bigger picture of career paths in the private sector in Dubai which may in turn influence others in their career choice in the future. You will also have the satisfaction of knowing you have contributed to a potentially valuable piece of research on female careers in the private sector in Dubai.

Will your taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that you share with me from both the in-depth interview and the online questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be coded in such a way that will protect yourself and the company or companies identified as being part of your career experience to this point in time. The responses will be fed into a data analysis software program for coding and analysis. All names will be removed and pseudonyms used. All data collected during the research will be stored on my password protected computer and kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to myself. The data will be stored for 15 years and may be used again to publish papers in academic and career journals.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be distributed to help graduates and other interested parties gain a better understanding of a career path in the private sector. The results will be published as a thesis with aggregate data being published and may be shared at academic conferences and in academic and business journals. Your name will not be associated with any of your statements that may appear in the publications so you are assured of complete anonymity. At the end of the study, if you are interested, I can send you a summary of the findings.

Funding for the study

A minimal amount of funding for this study will be made available by the University of Southern Queensland to cover basic research costs. This is part of the research scholarship that I have been granted for this study.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the University of Southern Queensland's Ethics Committee and will be carried out in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Contact for Further Information

If you are now willing to participate in this research study, please sign the consent form and either deliver it in person or email it back to me. You will be given a copy of this information sheet and the signed consent form to keep.

If on the other hand you have decided not to participate, thank you for your time.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact me:

Pamela Hawkswell

Dubai Women's College

P.O. Box 16062

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Telephone: 04 2089482

E-mail: pamela.hawkswell@hct.ac.ae

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

APPENDIX E

Consent Form – Studies 1 & 3

Consent Form for USQ Research Project
Interview**Project Details**

Title of Project: The Career Paths of Female

Human Research Ethics Approval Number:

H15REA252

Research Team Contact Details**Principal Investigator
Details**

Pamela May Hawkswell
Email: phawkswell@hct.ac.ae
Telephone: (971) 42089482
Mobile: (971) 50 5440826

Other Investigator/Supervisor Details

A/Prof Peter McIlveen
Email: peter.mcilveen@usq.edu.au
Telephone: (07) 4631 2375
Mobile: 0418 726 478

Statement of Consent**By signing below, you are indicating that you:**

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that the interview will be audio recorded.
- Understand that you will be provided with a copy of the transcript of the interview for your perusal and endorsement for two weeks prior to inclusion of this data in the project.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.

- Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.
- Are over 18 years of age.
- Agree to participate in the project.

Participant Name	<input type="text"/>
Participant Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the interview.

APPENDIX F**PIS – Study 2**

University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information Sheet for USQ**Research Project**

Study title: The Career Paths of Female Emirati Graduates
in the Private Sector in Dubai

Introduction:

I am inviting you to take part in research being conducted for my Doctorate of Education through the University of Southern Queensland in Australia. I will explain details of the research and then you will have the opportunity to decide if you would like to participate. Please read the following information carefully.

The purpose of the study:

The purpose of the study is to explore the career paths of female Emirati graduates in the private sector in Dubai. When the study is completed, I hope to have a better understanding of how female Emiratis in the private sector in Dubai make sense of their careers. The study will take place over a period of 3 – 6 months.

Why have you been chosen?

You have been chosen as a potential participant because I believe your work background and experience will enable you to share valuable information. This information will contribute towards building a picture of career paths in the private sector. It is your decision as to whether or not you take part in this research. By proceeding to the survey, you have given your consent to participate.

What do you have to do if you take part?

Your involvement will mean completing the online questionnaire that follows. It should take you no longer than 20 minutes to complete and will be a series of closed questions related to your work where you will be asked to share your experience of the private sector. I am hoping to recruit around 200 participants for this questionnaire and will be looking for general patterns in private sector career paths.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct benefit for you if you participate in the study. However, the information you provide will help to build a bigger picture of career paths in the private sector in Dubai which may in turn influence others in their career choice in the future. You will also have the satisfaction of knowing you have contributed to a potentially valuable piece of research on female careers in the private sector in Dubai.

Will your taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that you share with me from the online questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be coded in such a way that will protect yourself and the company or companies identified as being part of your career experience to this point in time. The responses will be fed into a data analysis software program for coding and analysis. All names will be removed and pseudonyms used. All data collected during the research will be stored on my password protected computer and kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to myself. The data will be stored according to university policy and procedure, and may be used again to publish papers in academic and career journals.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be distributed to help graduates and other interested parties gain a better understanding of a career path in the private sector. The results will be published as a thesis with aggregate data being published and may be shared at academic conferences and in academic and business journals. Your name will not be associated with any of your statements that may appear in the publications so you are assured of complete anonymity. At the end of the study, if you are interested, I can send you a summary of the findings.

Funding for the study

A minimal amount of funding for this study will be made available by the University of Southern Queensland to cover basic research costs. This is part of the research scholarship that I have been granted for this study.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the University of Southern Queensland's Ethics Committee and will be carried out in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Contact for Further Information

If you are now willing to participate in this research study, please proceed with the questionnaire.

If on the other hand you have decided not to participate, thank you for your time.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact me:

Pamela Hawkswell

Dubai Women's College

P.O. Box 16062

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Telephone: 04 2672929

E-mail: pamela.hawkswell@hct.ac.ae

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (617) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

APPENDIX G

PIS translated – Study 2



جامعة جنوب كوينزلاند

ورقة معلومات المشارك في البحث العلمي لجامعة جنوب كوينزلاند

عنوان الدراسة: المسارات الوظيفية للخريجات الإماراتيات في القطاع الخاص بدبي

المقدمة:

أدعوكم للمشاركة في البحث الخاص بدراستي الدكتوراه في التربيه من خلال جامعة جنوب كوينزلاند في أستراليا. وسوف أشرح تفاصيل البحث وبعد ذلك سيكون لديك الفرصة لتقرر ما إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة. يرجى قراءة المعلومات التالية بعناية.

الغرض من الدراسة:

والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف المسارات المهنية للخريجات الإماراتيات في القطاع الخاص في دبي. عند الانتهاء من الدراسة، أمل أن يكون هناك فهم أفضل لكيفية شعور الموظفات الإماراتيات في القطاع الخاص في دبي تجاه حياتهن المهنية. وستجرى الدراسة على مدى فترة تتراوح بين 3 و 6 أشهر.

لماذا تم اختيارك؟

لقد تم اختيارك كمشارك محتمل لأنني أعتقد أن خلفيتك وعملك وخبرتك ستتمكنك من مشاركتنا معلومات قيمة. وستسهم هذه المعلومات في بناء صورة للمسارات الوظيفية في القطاع الخاص. ولكم مطلق الحرية في المشاركة في هذا البحث أو الرفض. وإذا ما اخترتم أن تتابعوا هذا الاستبيان فهذا يعني أنك قد أعطيت موافقتك على المشاركة.

ماذا عليك أن تفعل إذا كنت تشارك؟

إن مشاركتك تعني استكمال الاستبيان الإلكتروني التالي. هذا الاستبيان لن يستغرق منك أكثر من 20 دقيقة لإكماله وسوف تكون سلسلة من الأسئلة المتعلقة بعملك حيث سيطلب منك تبادل الخبرات الخاصة بك في القطاع الخاص. أمل أن يتم توظيف حوالي 200 مشارك في هذا الاستبيان، وأنهم يبحثون عن أنماط عامة في المسارات الوظيفية للقطاع الخاص.

ما هي الفوائد الممكنة من المشاركة؟

لن تكون هناك فائدة مباشرة بالنسبة لك إذا كنت تشارك في هذه الدراسة. ومع ذلك، فإن المعلومات التي تقدمها تساعد على بناء صورة أكبر للمسارات الوظيفية في القطاع الخاص في دبي والتي قد تؤثر بدورها على الآخرين في اختيارهم الوظيفي في المستقبل. وبهذا تكون قد ساهمت وبشكل خاص في هذا البحث الذي من الممكن أن يكون ذو قيمة بالنسبة لتأثيره على وظائف المرأة في القطاع الخاص في دبي.

هل ستظل مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة سرية؟

سيتم الاحتفاظ بجميع المعلومات التي تشاركها معي خلال الاستبيان عبر الإنترنت بسرية تامة. سيتم ترميز الردود الخاصة بك بطريقة من شأنها أن تحمي نفسك والشركة أو الشركات التي تم تحديدها باعتبارها جزءاً من تجربتك المهنية حتى الآن. وسيتم تغذية الردود في برنامج تحليل بيانات البرمجيات للترميز والتحليل. ستتم إزالة جميع الأسماء واستخدام الأسماء المستعارة. سيتم تخزين جميع البيانات التي تم جمعها خلال البحث على جهاز الكمبيوتر الخاص بي محمية بكلمة مرور وستبقى في خزانة إلكترونية مغلقة لا يستطيع دخولها إلا الشخص المصرح له أي أنا فقط. سيتم تخزين البيانات وفقاً لسياسة الجامعة والإجراءات، ويمكن استخدامها مرة أخرى لنشر الأوراق في المجالات الأكاديمية والمهنية

ماذا سيحدث لنتائج الدراسة البحثية؟

سيتم توزيع نتائج الدراسة لمساعدة الخريجين والأطراف المعنية الأخرى على فهم أفضل للمسار المهني في القطاع الخاص. وسيتم نشر النتائج كأطروحة مع البيانات الإجمالية التي يتم نشرها ويمكن تقاسمها في المؤتمرات الأكاديمية وفي المجالات الأكاديمية والتجارية. لن يتم إقران اسمك بأي من بياناتك التي قد تظهر في المطبوعات حتى يتم التأكد من عدم الكشف عن هويتك بالكامل. في نهاية الدراسة، إذا كنت مهتماً بإمكانني أن أرسل لك ملخصاً للنتائج.

تمويل الدراسة

سوف توفر جامعة جنوب كوينزلاند مبلغاً بسيطاً من التمويل لهذه الدراسة لتغطية تكاليف البحوث الأساسية. هذا هو جزء من منحة البحث التي تم منحها لهذه الدراسة.

من الذي استعرض الدراسة؟

قد تم استعراض الدراسة من قبل لجنة الأخلاقيات في جامعة جنوب كوينزلاند وسيتم تنفيذها وفقاً للبيان الوطني حول السلوك الأخلاقي في البحوث البشرية.

يرجى الاتصال للحصول على مزيد من المعلومات

إذا كنت الآن على استعداد للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية، يرجى المضي قدماً في الاستبيان. وإذا كنت لا ترغب في المشاركة، فشكراً لكم على وقتك.

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات، لا تتردد في الاتصال بي:

بامبلا هوكسويل

كلية دبي للطالبات

صندوق البريد: 16062

الإمارات العربية المتحدة، دبي

هاتف: 042672929

البريد الإلكتروني: pamela.hawkswell@hct.ac.ae

إذا كانت لديك أي مخاوف أو شكاوى بشأن السلوك الأخلاقي للمشروع، يمكنك الاتصال بمنسق الأخلاقيات في جامعة جنوب كوينزلاند على الرقم (617) 2690 4631 أو إرسال رسالة إلى ethics@usq.edu.au. ولا يرتبط منسق الأخلاقيات بالمشروع البحثي ولذلك سوف يتوصل إلى حل بطريقة غير منحازة.

APPENDIX H

Interview Questions – Study 1

University of Southern Queensland**Self-Efficacy:**

Self-efficacy is the confidence one has in one's ability to complete a task or tasks related to one's goal (Fouad & Guillen). There are 3 types – coping, process and self-regulatory. What is the psychological experience?

Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: SAGE.

1. Can you tell me when you consider your career started? How did it start?

OR

1. Can you please tell me about how your career happened . . . and how it has all turned out . . . the/your story . . . and your experience.

OR

1. Please tell me about your experience of your career since it became important in your life. How did things happen up to now?

1. You could start around the time when you first started to think about what you would like to do for a living.

OR

1. Begin wherever you like. (If there is a temporal focus whereby the interviewee decided where and when "it" starts and "it" finishes.)

AND

Please take the time you need. We've got about 30 minutes.

I'll listen first, I won't interrupt but will take some notes for after you've finished telling me about the experiences which have been important for you.

(Note: units of meaning may not consist only of adjacent speech and adjacent speech may be part of different units of meaning.)

2. Can you tell me more about your career? What do you think/feel about it?
3. Can you tell me about all those events and experiences which were important for you (with regards to your career). How did it all develop up to now?
4. If they say then I say, "What was it like?" (e.g. getting promoted)

If interviewee indicates stage by stage experiences of career then these questions could direct each stage. In my case it could relate to a change of organisations and/or career direction or a change in personal circumstances.

Outcome Expectations:

(If-then questions. Include anticipated social, monetary/materialistic and self-approval/evaluation types)

If I engage in this activity then I can expect a particular physical, social and/or self-evaluative outcome.

(Social)

1. How might your family and friends feel if you go on to be highly successful in your career?

2. How might your friends feel if you go on to be highly successful in your career?
3. How might society feel if you go on to be highly successful in your career?

(Materialistic/physical)

4. If you continue on this (career) path, tell me how it will affect your lifestyle.

(Self - approval/evaluation)

5. How do you rate your chances for a successful career in the future?
6. How do you see . . . your career path from here on OR opportunities related to your career path?

Goals:

(Performance)

1. At this point in my career development I am trying to . . . (ask for a list of 3 goals)
2. At this point in my career development I am trying to . . .
3. At this point in my career development I am trying to . . .

(Career Development Strivings: Assessing Goals and Motivation in Career

Decision-Making and Planning. Bryan J. Dik, Adam M. Sargent and Michael F. Steger.

Journal of Career Development 2008; 35; 23. DOI: 10.1177/0894845308317934)

APPENDIX I

Coding Table Sample – Study 1

Appendix I - Coding Table Study 1 - Word

Aspects of the SCCT

Pink = SE/OE
 Yellow = SE
 Blue = OE
 Green = GS
 Grey = other

Original Data	Comments
<p>Salma: (Interview 1) Well actually, I started in, I started working in 2005, but my career actually started in 2008 because it was just then, er, that I started interfering more in my career. And I was working in an insurance company. In 2008 I decided to study insurance so I could be more involved in the insurance market so that's why I consider my career started in 2008. And then it continued 'til, 'til 2014 in the private sectors, insurance companies, two different insurance companies I worked.</p> <p>Salma: ... I started to grow interested in the in the insurance that's why I decided to study it and once I study it I, I became more involved in it and I had more experience and knowledge there.</p> <p>Salma: Well dealing with customers face to face, communicating with them that helped me to develop my communication skills. It allowed me to speak good English because I was practising it otherwise many,</p>	<p>Deliberate career intervention on behalf of interviewee. Suggestion that for first 3 years, career had not taken off.</p> <p>Decision to take responsibility/control for career specialise in insurance.</p> <p>Interest (in insurance) led to more involvement in career.</p> <p>Link to career advancement and communication in English. Lack of this opportunity in the Government sector.</p>

Comments

Pamela February 20, 2016
 E-E as "interfere" suggests control. Could also be O-E as "interfere" suggests deliberate action for an outcome expectancy.

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APPENDIX J Coding Themes

(Aspects of SCCT)

Pink = SE/OE
 Yellow = SE
 Blue = OE
 Green = GS
 Grey = other

(p. 227 of Braun & Clarke) A pattern-based analysis will not just look *within* a question, but *across* the whole dataset to determine themes.

Codes	Possible Themes
1. SE/OE	<p>Interview 1: Deliberate career intervention after 3 years' experience in insurance. Understanding different managers – how to satisfy them.</p> <p>Career Path intention.</p> <p>Interview 2: Intervention in career by changing banks for better position.</p> <p>More experiences and training and better chances in private sector. Better development opportunities compared to Government.</p> <p>Customer care in beginning. Lack of self-confidence in dealing with customer. The benefits and outcomes of training.</p> <p>Interview 3: Acknowledgement of being seen as worthy by manager and others. Self-worth and reputation.</p> <p>Other benefits – family business, more savings.</p> <p>Achievements. Job in first week.</p>

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APPENDIX K

Coding Themes with Extracts

Appendix K - Coding Themes with Extracts - Word

FILE HOME INSERT DESIGN PAGE LAYOUT REFERENCES MAILINGS REVIEW VIEW

Clipboard Font Paragraph Styles Editing

Themes	Coding	
Achievements	Career Gaining	Career Challenging
	<p>Salma: It was the first company I am working for where I'm working in insurance with my first experience and I stayed around 3 – 4 years in that company. I gained a lot of experience and I didn't understand this until I went to my second company. Where everybody was saying, oh she's good, she's good, <u>she's</u> good. Even the HR manager came to know my name. <u>Er</u>, of course it made me feel happy and proud about myself.</p>	<p>Salma: Or dealing with angry customers also helped me a lot in understanding the employees around me now to be able to understand the employees how they react or what they are going to react. Also dealing with different managers gave me some idea about different types of managers, how to deal with them, how they will be satisfied, happy or angry or <u>sad</u> . . . This all was experience.</p> <p>Sumaya: I think that they are not fighting with me they are fighting with the company. But in the</p>

Comments

Pamela February 20, 2016
 BE to deal with managers to expect a certain (positive) outcome.

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APPENDIX L

Translated Questions Study 2

2

ملاحظة: يرجى تقديم المعلومات التالية عن نفسك، والتي سوف تساعدنا على فهم أفضل لنتائج هذه الدراسة. هذه المعلومات سرية للغاية، وسيتم الإبلاغ عنها فقط في شكل مجموعة لحماية هويتك.

1. ما هي أعلى درجة تعليمية لديك؟

الماجستير _____ البكالوريوس _____ دبلوم _____ آخر _____

2. هل تدرس حالياً؟

نعم _____ لا _____

3. العمر _____

4 - الحالة الاجتماعية:

أعزب _____ متزوج _____ مطلق _____ أرمل _____

5. عدد الأطفال _____

6. ما هو القطاع الذي تعمل فيه؟

خاص _____ شبه خاص _____ عام / حكومي _____

7. ما هو المجال الذي تعمل فيه؟

الخدمات المصرفية والمالية _____ الصحة _____ وسائل الإعلام _____ التجزئة _____ غيرها (يرجى ذكر المجال) _____

8. منذ متى تعمل في المؤسسة الحالية؟
السنوات _____ أشهر _____

ملاحظة: البيانات التالية تتعلق بكيفية الاستجابة لحالات معينة فيما يتعلق بعملك. يرجى تقييم موافقتك على مقياس من 6 نقاط، من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة).

1 (لا أوافق بشدة) 2 (غير موافق) 3 (لا أتفق ولا أخالف) 4 (موافق) 5 (موافق بشدة)

1. أستطيع أن أظل هادئاً عندما أواجه صعوبات في عملي لأنني أستطيع الاعتماد على قدراتي.

2. عندما أواجه مشكلة في عملي، يمكنني عادة العثور على العديد من الحلول.

3. مهما اعترضني في العمل من مشاكل، فإنني أجد التعامل معها عادة.

4. إن تجربتي السابقة في عملي قد أعدتني بشكل جيد لمستقبلي المهني.

5. أحقق الأهداف التي وضعتها لنفسني في وظيفتي.

6. أشعر بأنني مستعد لمعظم المطالب في عملي.

ملاحظة: البيانات التالية تتعلق بكيفية شعورك في العمل. يرجى قراءة كل بيان بعناية وتقرر ما إذا كنت تشعر بهذه الطريقة عن عملك. إذا لم يكن لديك هذا الشعور، فاختر خانة "0" (صفر) بعد البيان. إذا كان لديك هذا الشعور، فاختر من (1-6) عدداً يصف بشكل أفضل كم مرة كنت تشعر بهذه الطريقة.

أبداً	شبه معدوم	نادراً	أحياناً	في كثير من الاحيان	غالباً	دائماً
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
أبداً	بعض الاحيان في سنة أو أقل	مرة كل شهر أو أقل	مرات قليله في الشهر	مرة في الاسبوع	عدة مرات في الاسبوع	كل يوم

3. في عملي، أشعر بوجود طاقة كبيرة للعمل. (VII)

4. في عملي، أشعر بالقوة و اني مليء بالطاقة. (VI2)

5. أنا متحمس بشأن عملي. (DE2)

7. عملي يلهمني. (DE3)

8. عندما أستيقظ في الصباح، أشعر بالنشاط للذهاب إلى العمل. (VI3)

9. أشعر بالسعادة عندما أعمل بشكل مكثف. (AB3)

10 - أنا فخور بالعمل الذي أفعله. (DE4)

11. أنا منغمس في عملي. (AB4)

14. أشعر بالحماس و الإثارة عندما أعمل. (AB5)

ملاحظة: البيانات التالية تتعلق بما كنت تتوقع أن يحدث في المستقبل فيما يتعلق بحياتك المهنية. يرجى تقييم الاتفاق الخاص بك على مقياس من 4 نقاط، من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 4 (توافق بشدة).

	4	3	2	1
1. تخطيط حياتي المهنية يؤدي إلى مهنة مرضية بالنسبة لي. أتوقع حياتي المهنية مرضية بالنسبة لي في المستقبل.				

4	3	2	1	2. سأكون ناجحا في مهنتي
4	3	2	1	3. المستقبل يبدو مشرق بالنسبة لي
4	3	2	1	4. سأستخدم مواهبي ومهاراتي في مسيرتي المهنية.
4	3	2	1	5. لدي السيطرة على قراراتي المهنية.
4	3	2	1	6. يمكنني جعل مستقبلي مستقبلاً سعيداً
4	3	2	1	7. سأحصل على الوظيفة التي أريدها في مهنتي المختاره. (التقييم الذاتي)
4	3	2	1	8. اختيار حياتي المهنية / المهنة سيوفر الدخل الذي أحتاجه. (مادي)
4	3	2	1	سوف تكون مهنتي من المهن التي تحظى بالاحترام في مجتمعنا. (اجتماعي)

4	3	2	1	سوف أحقق مسيرتي المهنية أو الأهداف المهنية. (التقييم الذاتي)
4	3	2	1	ستوافق عائلتي على اختياري الوظيفي / المهنة. (اجتماعي)

ملاحظة: الأسئلة التالية ستكون عن خبراتك السابقة في اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بمستقبل حياتك المهنية. ويمكن أن تشمل مثل هذه القرارات أشياء مثل، ما هو الاتجاه الوظيفي الذي تتبعه، ما هو التخصص الدراسي الذي ترغب به، أو ما هي الكلية التي تريد أن تحصل فيها على التعليم . يرجى تقييم موافقتك على مقياس من 5 نقاط، من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة)

1 (لا يوافق بشدة) 2 (غير موافق) 3 (لا يتفق ولا يخالف) 4 (موافق) 5 (موافق بشدة)

1. إن الطريقة التي اتخذت بها القرارات الهامة المتعلقة بالمهنة قد عملت بشكل جيد بالنسبة لي في الماضي
2. لقد قمت بعمل جيد في وزن الإيجابيات والسلبيات من الخيارات المختلفة عندما كان علي أن اتخذ القرارات المتعلقة بالوظيفة
3. لقد كنت جيداً في وضع القرارات المتعلقة بحياتي المهنية والعمل
4. لقد كنت جيداً في جمع المعلومات التي أحتاجها لاتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بالمهنة
5. الأشخاص المهمون في حياتي ساندوني في أن أعرف أنني فعلاً متمكن من جمع المعلومات اللازمة لاتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بالوظيفي
- 6 - الأشخاص المهمون في حياتي أخبروني أنني أؤدي عملاً جيداً في النظر في إيجابيات وسلبيات الخيارات المختلفة عند اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بالوظائف
- 7 - الأشخاص المهمون في حياتي أخبروني أنني قد أريد تقييم الخيارات التي من شأنها أن تلبي احتياجاتي على أفضل وجه في اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بالوظائف

- 8 - الأشخاص المهمون في حياتي أخبروني أنني أحسن في إدارة التحديات التي تنشأ عند اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بالوظائف
9. لدي نماذج يحتذى بها في اتخاذ القرارات المهنية الهامة
10. يوجد حولي أناس أعجب بطريقة جمعهم للمعلومات التي يحتاجونها لاتخاذ القرارات المهنية.
11. لدي نماذج يحتذى بها حول كيفية تناسب اهتماماتهم وقدراتهم مع خيارات مهنية مختلفة
- 12 - لدي نماذج ممتازة أوضحت لي كيف اختار طريقا أكاديميا رئيسيا أو مسارا مهنيا

ملاحظة: الأسئلة التالية يطلب منك التفكير في أهدافك المستقبلية. يرجى تقييم موافقتك على مقياس من 5 نقاط، من 1 (لا أوافق بشدة) إلى 5 (أوافق بشدة).

1 (لا يوافق بشدة) 2 (غير موافق) 3 (لا يوافق ولا يخالف) 4 (موافق) 5 (موافق بشدة)

- 1 - ترتبط أهدافي المستقبلية بالحصول على مزيد من التعليم.
- 2- ترتبط أهدافي المستقبلية بالحصول على ترقية.
- 3 - ترتبط أهدافي المستقبلية بتغيير المؤسسة التي أعمل بها.
4. ترتبط أهدافي المستقبلية بتغيير مهنتي.
- 5 - ترتبط أهدافي المستقبلية بافتتاح عملي الخاص.

APPENDIX M

Exploratory Sequential Design for Mixed Methods

Phase 1 – Qualitative Research Years 1 & 2

Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstructured Interviews – 5 participants Participant (member) checks Interview notes (pre and post interview) Regular audits by Supervisors
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recordings • Audio transcriptions • Text analysis
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified codes and themes • Possible application to a wider population via next study

Phase 2 – Quantitative Research Years 2 & 3

Instrument Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed online survey comprising 43 items some ready-made and some tailor-made from Phase 1 results • Demographics added to survey
Instrument Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translated questions from English into Arabic • Double-checked translation for accuracy before distribution • Administered survey over a period of 4 months to 41 participants with periodical reminders to complete

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checked structure of items and conducted reliability analysis for scales
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared sub-scale items against scales • Identified correlations and regressions amongst items and scales • Prepared items for final phase (qualitative) to clarify expected and unexpected results

Phase 3 – Qualitative Research Years 3 & 4

Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted unstructured Interviews – 6 participants <p>Participant (member) checks</p> <p>Interview notes (pre and post interview)</p> <p>Regular audits by Supervisors</p>
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recordings • Audio transcriptions • Text analysis
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared results with those of Phase 2 • Identified commonalities and abnormalities • Summarised outcomes of the mixed methods approach

APPENDIX N

Interview Questions – Study 3

1. Communalities, Factor Loadings, Item–Total Correlations, Cronbach’s Alpha and Fit Statistics for Confirmatory Factor Analyses of Occupational Self-Efficacy Across Five Country Samples

(A Short Version of the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale: Structural and Construct Validity Across Five Countries)
Thomas Rigotti, Birgit Schyns and Gisela Mohr)

Items were rated on a 6-level response scale from *not at all true* to *completely true*. High levels indicate high occupational self-efficacy.

Instructions: The following statements relate to how you respond to certain situations in relation to your job. Please rate your agreement on the 6-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (neither agree nor disagree) 4 (agree) 5 (strongly agree)

1. I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities.
2. When I am confronted with a problem in my job, I can usually find several solutions.
3. Whatever comes my way in my job, I can usually handle it.
4. My past experiences in my job have prepared me well for my occupational future.
5. I meet the goals that I set for myself in my job.
6. I feel prepared for most of the demands in my job.

2. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 Version Attached: Full Test Psyc TESTS Citation: Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., and Salanova, M. (2006). Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t05561-000>
Instrument Type: Rating Scale Test Format:

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 UWES-9

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

Instructions: The following statements relate to how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

3. At my work, I feel bursting with energy. (VI1)
4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (VI2)
5. I am enthusiastic about my job. (DE2)
7. My job inspires me. (DE3)

8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (VI3)
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely. (AB3)
10. I am proud of the work that I do. (DE4)
11. I am immersed in my work. (AB4)
14. I get carried away when I am working. (AB5)

3. Outcome Expectations: (Perhaps reverse the numbers as Arabic is read left to right)

McWhirter, E. H., and J. Metheny. "Vocational Outcome Expectations-Revised. A measure of expectations associated with career planning for high school students." *Unpublished measure* (2009).

(Include social, monetary/materialistic and self-approval types. We will use a generic questionnaire but will adjust to reflect precisely what Emirati females and those in the private sector think according to interview results. Study 1 responses will direct.)

Instructions: The following statements relate to what you what you expect to happen in future in relation to your career. Please rate your agreement on the 4-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree 1				Strongly agree 4
1. My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me. I expect my career to be satisfying for me in the future.	1	2	3	4	

	Strongly disagree 1			Strongly agree 4
2. I will be successful in my chosen career/occupation.	1	2	3	4
3. The future looks bright for me.	1	2	3	4
4. My talents and skills will be used in my career/occupation.	1	2	3	4
5. I have control over my career decisions.	1	2	3	4
6. I can make my future a happy one.	1	2	3	4
7. I will get the job I want in my chosen career. (Self-evaluation)	1	2	3	4
8. My career/occupation choice will provide the income I need. (physical)	1	2	3	4

	Strongly disagree 1				Strongly agree 4
9. I will have a career/occupation that is respected in our society. (social)	1	2	3	4	
10. I will achieve my career/occupational goals. (Self- evaluation)	1	2	3	4	
11. My family will approve of my career/occupation choice. (social)	1	2	3	4	

4. Sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations for career exploration and decision-making.

Lent, R.W., Ireland, G. W., Penn, L.T., Morris, T. R. and Sappington, R. 2017. Sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations for career exploration and decision-making. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 99, 107-117.

Instructions: The following questions ask about your past experiences in making decisions related to your career future. Such decisions can include things like what career direction to pursue, what major to declare, or what college to attend.

Please rate your agreement on the 5-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (neither agree nor disagree) 4 (agree) 5 (strongly agree)

1. The way I have approached important career-related decisions has worked well for me in the past
5. I have done a good job of weighing the positives and negatives of different options when I have had to make career-related decisions
6. I have been good at putting my career-related decisions into action
7. I have been resourceful at gathering the information I need to make career-related decisions
8. Important others have let me know that I am resourceful when it comes to gathering information needed to make career-related decisions
9. Important others have let me know I do a good job of considering the positives and negatives of different choice options when making career-related decisions
10. Important others have let me know that I have been good at evaluating the choice options that would best meet my needs in making career-related decisions

11. Important others have let me know that I am good at managing challenges that arise when making career-related decisions
12. I have role models who are good at making important career decisions
13. I have observed people I admire who are resourceful at gathering the information they need to make career-related decisions
14. I have role models who are knowledgeable about how their interests and abilities fit different career options
15. I have role models who have explained to me how they chose an academic major or career path

5. Goal Setting Questions:

(Taken from Themes from coding document from Study 1 interviews)

Instructions: The following questions ask you to think about your future goals. Please rate your agreement on the 5-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (neither agree nor disagree) 4 (agree) 5 (strongly agree)

6. My future goals are related to further education.
7. My future goals are related to getting a promotion.
8. My future goals are related to changing organisations.
9. My future goals are related to changing careers.
10. My future goals are related to opening my own business.

APPENDIX O**Interview Notes – Study 3****Interview 6: (16/04/2018)**

29 year old single female whose highest degree is a master's. She has worked in the company for 12 years. Has a yen to go into academia and to continue on to do a Doctorate. .She comes across as very much knowing her own mind. Her determination will no doubt lead her to where she wants to be. **(Banking and Finance)**

Interview 7: (18/04/2018)

22 year old single female, high school graduate almost ready to graduate with a Bachelor in Business Administration – Human Resources. She has worked for 3 years 2 months in her current organisation. Ex-student who is a natural in the HR area. A committed and motivated student. Recently she was chosen by the airline to go to Europe for a weekend of recruiting new staff. She embraces such opportunities and makes the most of them. **(Airline)**

Interview 8: (22/04/2018)

28 year old single female who is nearing graduation with a Bachelor in Business in Administration – Human Resources. She obtained her diploma in a private university in Dubai. She has worked in her current organisation for 4.5 years. Ex-student who mirrors at college what she describes in her workplace. Always misses at least half the class due to travel time and is not good at meeting deadlines. She has a lot of potential but her tardiness lets her down. Has a very good knowledge of the working world and lots of experience to fall back on.

(Manufacturing)

Interview 9: (25/04/2018)

22 year old, single female majoring in a Bachelor in Business in Administration - Quality and Strategic Management. She has worked in the current organisation for 2.5 years. Ex-student who is very articulate and also good at written communication. Focussed during class and is mature for her age. I put this down to her work experience. **(Banking and Finance)**

Interview 10: (06/05/2018)

25 year old, single female, who has a Bachelor degree. She has worked in her current organisation for 1 year and 9 months. A very mature ex-student that has spent time overseas studying. She has progressive thinking – no doubt a result of her exposure to western culture during her stint overseas. According to the interview, she is most definitely being undervalued at work and this together with boredom will eventually lead to her exploring other career opportunities where she can show her worth. She may well jump straight into her own business although lacks experience to do this. **(Banking)**

Interview 11: (16/05/2018)

32 year old married female with a master's degree. She worked in the IT industry for 2 years. She did an internship in Canada with IBM before joining her company here. Quiet by nature, it was a surprise to learn that she has gone against family wishes to pursue a career in IT. Even though surrounded by doctors, she had no desire to join the medical ranks. She is adamant she will continue doing as she wishes regardless of what the family thinks and believes she will eventually win them around to her way of thinking. **(IT)**

** Role models for four participants were ex-managers (2 females and 2 males) who had now left their sphere of influence. The remaining two participants cited family members as their role models – a mother was mentioned in one instant and an entrepreneurial father in another.

Step 1 before coding (Braun & Clarke p. 205)

8. How does a participant make sense of their experiences?
9. Why might they be making sense of their experiences in this way (and not another way)?
10. In what different ways do they make sense of the topic discussed?
11. How 'common-sense' is their story?
12. How would I feel if I were in a similar situation? (different from or similar to how the participant feels and why?)
13. What assumptions do they make in talking about the world?
14. What kind of world is 'revealed' through their account?

During coding for GT (to stay focused on action and processes in the data) – p. 216

Use gerunds – e.g. fat shaming or career building/planning

4. What process/es are at issue here? How can I define it?
5. How do the research participants act while involved in this process?
6. What are the consequences of this process?

APPENDIX P

Interview Questions – Study 3

THE OSES does not correlate with UWES or its subscales – their sense of confidence (as efficacy) is not related to their engagement in their profession.

I'd like to find out more about your sense of self-efficacy in relation to your current job. Self-efficacy is the belief you have in your ability to achieve in different areas of your life. We will focus on your current job. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being not very confident to 5 being very confident:

3. How confident are you that you are performing your current job at the level expected by your manager?
4. Explain and give examples.
5. How confident are you that you can handle problems in your current job when they come along?
6. Explain this rating and give examples.
7. How confident do you feel in your ability to meet the goals you set for yourself in your current job?
8. Explain and give examples.
- 9.

In relation to your engagement in your current workplace, on a scale of 1 - 6 with 1 being never enthusiastic and 6 being always enthusiastic:

1. How enthusiastic are you to go to work each day?
2. Explain this rating and give some examples.
3. Once you get to work, how committed are you to your tasks for the time you are there – again rate on a scale of 1 – 6?
4. Explain this rating and give some examples.
5. How dedicated are you to your work in general – rate on a scale of 1 – 6?
6. Explain this rating and give some examples.

Given that I want to see how your self-efficacy relates to your work engagement, some questions about this are:

1. How do you think your confidence in your ability to achieve well in your current job affects your **overall engagement with your work and vice versa?**
2. How do you think your level of confidence affects **your enthusiasm to go to work each day and vice versa?**
3. How do you think your level of confidence affects your **commitment to your work tasks and vice versa?**
4. How do you think your level of confidence affects your **general dedication to your work and vice versa?**

Of the sources of S-E, only SSEOE verbal persuasion correlates with business goal

($r = .406$. Personal mastery ($r = .178$) and vicarious learning ($r = .158$) do not. Why?

The following questions ask about your past experiences in making decisions related to your career future. Such decisions can include things like what career direction to pursue, what major to declare, or what college to attend. Please rate your reply on a scale of 1 – 5 where applicable, with 1 being very low/very dis-satisfied (~~strongly disagree~~) and 5 being very high/very satisfied (~~strongly agree~~).

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the decisions you have made regarding your career?
2. Explain this rating and give instances of how you've actioned these decisions.
3. How do you think your past successes will help you to achieve your future career goals? (Note: Use previous responses to guide this question – e.g., if they have further education goals, want to seek a promotion, or want to open their own business)

4. How do you think others who are important to you would rate you on your ability to make good career decisions? Explain why you think they would rate you that way. Give examples. (Who are these others?)
5. How do you think others who are important to you would rate you on your ability to action your career decisions? Explain why you think they would rate you that way. Give examples. (Who are these others?)
6. How do you think the people who are important to you will help you to achieve your future career goals? (Note: Use previous responses to guide this question – e.g., if they have further education goals, want to seek a promotion, or want to open their own business)
7. Do you have any role models who you think are good at making important career decisions? Do you use these role models to assist you with your career decision-making? Give examples. (Who are these models?)
8. Do you have any role models who have helped you to choose an academic major or career path? Give examples. (Who are these models?)
9. Who do you rely on most when making decisions: yourself, others important to you, or role models? Why?
10. How do you think your role models will help you to achieve your future career goals? (Note: Use previous responses to guide this question – e.g., if they have further education goals, want to seek a promotion, or want to open their own business)

Finally I would like to find out how sources of self-efficacy relate to goal setting. For example:

What are your future career goals in terms of:

- a) engaging in further education
- b) getting a promotion

- c) changing organisations
- d) opening your own business