

CORRELATION BETWEEN TRAINING AND PRODUCTIVITY: CASE STUDY ON ENTERPRISING FAMILY OF GCC

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is a great resource to any SME especially in the recent times where markets are characterized by stiff competition. Entrepreneur Training (ET) is an important strategic tool that is leveraged in modern management to enjoy competitive advantage and stabilize the success of companies. The motive for ET is to improve skills, enhance entrepreneur knowledge and develop the SME. This attempts to examine the implication of ET on enterprising family productivity (EFP) in the Gulf Cooperation Council. The study was conducted through an empirical research design; a survey method was employed and the study population comprised 15 SMEs Owners in Oman. Data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The data was subsequently analysed using quantitative techniques of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The researcher only carried out the research in Oman due to financial and time constraints. However, the research believes that the result of this study may be inferred to all GCC member countries. The researcher finds that there is a strong, statistically significant positive implication of ET on SMEs performance. SMEs owners who had invest in ET reported improved productivity in their SMEs.

Keywords: Entrepreneur Training, Enterprise Family Productivity, SMEs Performance, GCC

1. INTRODUCTION

Countries in the 21st century continue to witness significant institutional, economic and technological changes. There is a dramatic shift towards knowledge economy as argued by Powel & Snellman (2004). Competition among organizations is today determined by who has more creative and innovative ideas rather than only their financial muscles. The increasing competitive environment has forced companies to create innovative ideas to improve their competitive advantage. Companies are promoting the training environment in their workplaces for this reason. Training can be viewed as a measurable change in how people behave due to

experiences, study or instructions. Training involves a measurable change in behavioral tendencies. Scholars argue that training is a process that involves finding knowledge, creating knowledge, using knowledge and sharing knowledge and leads to change in behavior. Training can therefore be viewed in both an individual and entrepreneur context.

ET is a process through which stakeholders contribute their knowledge collectively and individually to achieve the goals and missions of organizations. ET is thus of great importance in helping organizations change with the changes in their environment. Gulf Cooperation Council member countries believe that ET can influence entrepreneur performance. The discovery of vast oil reserves in GCC has allowed for unmatched developmental achievement in the region. These countries relied on financial surplus from oil business to attract improved entrepreneur skills in organizations (Khan, et. al. (2016). However, it is important to note that there is lack of sufficient literature explaining the implication of ET and enterprising family productivity (EFP) in the GCC. This study is an attempt to close this gap by illustrating the implication of ET on EFP. The study is based on a comprehensive empirical study that assesses the ET in 15 SMEs in Oman.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- ET is a concept that explains the growth in the ability to think on ways to improve productivity, through which continuous improvement of the organizations' ability is achieved (Marquardt, 2002).
- Scholars and management experts have discussed the concept of ET for close to half a decade. However, the topic is gaining more concern today owing to increased competition in the business environment. The current business environment is characterized by many changes and challenges hence the need for organizations to increase their ability to learn and adopt with the changes. Therefore, organizations with a higher affinity for ET would enjoy competitive advantage over their peers in the market (Allameh & Moghaddami, 2010).
- Dawes (2003) categorizes ET into three types. These types include hereditary training, experimental training, and vicarious training. Hereditary training is developed by the organization founders and passed down to new members in the organization. Experimental training refers to training obtained through experience either on purpose or by chance. Vicarious training refers to the training which is gained by individuals who are outside the organization.
- According to Hashemi (1990), there are nine contributing factors to ET. These factors include; team training, systems thinking, ideal and vision commons, experimenting new approaches, training from others, mental models skill and domination personals and knowledge transfer (Odor, 2018).

- Organizations therefore put in great efforts in attempting to improve the productivity of their workforce. Sels et al., (2006) defines EFP as a review of the efficiency of an entrepreneur or a group of entrepreneurs. Sels further argues that EFP has a direct influence of the profits gained by an organization.
- There are many studies that have been carried out on the assessment of EFP. However, the results from these studies according to Nollman (2013) can be challenging to compare due to different models used in the studies. Moreover, there is a general lack of standardized ways to assess EFP. Sharma and Sharma (2014) argues that EFP is influenced by the time an entrepreneur is present at their job posts in addition to their mental presence and efficiency in delivering their duties at the job post. Therefore organizations must address the issues of time and entrepreneur mental presence to increase productivity of their workers.
- According to Zohair, (2014) training is an important aspect that influences the entrepreneur development since entrepreneurs do not develop the necessary skills and competencies at ones. These skills are gained through continuous training, exposure and experience.
- Previous empirical studies have highlighted a strong correlation between training and EFP. Farooq & Aslam (2011) empirical research shows a positive correlation between entrepreneurs training and the productivity of the entrepreneur with a correlation coefficient (r) =0.233. Various researcher in Oman have identified training as a way of building entrepreneur competence in meeting the goals of their organizations.
- Scholars such as Williamson (1985) however were in support of compensating differences theory. The scholar argues that entrepreneurs who work in good working conditions receive higher compensation compared to those working in undesirable environments.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The specific objectives of this research study were to determine the state of ET within the SMEs in GCC and to examine the correlation between information acquisition, EFP, information storage, information sharing, age, EFP and the contribution of ET to entrepreneur performance improvement within Omani SMEs.

3.1 Research design

The research study mainly employed questionnaire approach and partly relied on the quantitative approach. A survey method was chosen because it would help discover training factors that are common across the commercial SMEs and hence provide the basis for generalization about the research study objects. The researcher intends to understand the behaviour of entrepreneurs when they are subjected to ET. The research design was determined to be appropriate in this study because the variables identified were measured across 20 commercial SMEs in Oman. The

variables were descriptive and qualitative in nature hence the researcher relied on descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to analyse the data. The cross-sectional study design enabled the researcher to collect data relied upon to make inferences concerning the entire population of the GCC which was the main topic of study.

3.2 Sampling

The researcher employed purposive sampling as a specific target group of participants took part in the study. The sample size was 200 entrepreneurs from 20 SMEs who had spent a minimum of 5 years working as entrepreneurs in Oman or GCC.

3.3 Data collection

The primary data was relied upon to arrive at inferential conclusions in this survey. The primary data was gathered by means of self-administered questionnaires sought to collect entrepreneur views on their perception of ET and how it improves their performance. The secondary sources which include books and journals were obtained from online and public libraries.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

The study was intended to cover the whole GCC member countries. However, due to financial and time constraints the researcher settled on a case study model. Moreover, the researcher relied on convenient sampling to identify the respondents for the questionnaires. Only 150 questionnaires were dully filled and hence relied upon in this study. This was however a small sample space given hundreds of SMEs and thousands of SMEs entrepreneurs in the GCC. Therefore, this number cannot be claimed to be representative of the perception of entrepreneurs on ET in all GCC member countries. Additionally, the fact that the study only focused on Omani SMEs may deny the potential application of this study in other sectors of the GCC economy such as the oil industry, tourism and real estate's which are great pillars in the economy of Oman. Moreover, the study over relied on entrepreneur perception of their productivity to arrive at conclusions of this study. However, some entrepreneurs may not respond to such questions objectively and the researcher had no technical capacity to identify such entrepreneurs.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The gathered data was evaluated and analysed by using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. A total of 200 questionnaires were submitted to respondents drawn from all the 20 commercial SMEs in the Sultanate of Oman. All the response from the participants was visually reviewed for completeness. However, the researcher were only able to receive back 150 questionnaires that were fully completed within the strenuous time limit. The response rate thus

was 75% which was significant (Mugenda 2003). Most of the respondents i.e. 78.7% were male and female respondents were 21.3 percent as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Gender distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	118	78.7	78.7	78.7
	2	32	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

The table above shows a vivid description of how the gender of the samples was distributed in terms of cumulative percentage. The total number of the samples was 150 based on the number of the questionnaires that were fully filled and returned to the researcher.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Indicator Variables

The raw response data was computed using SPSS to get the relevant descriptive statistics. The value of the indicator variables was calculated as the mean of the constituent questionnaire items. The expected chance score will be 3.0 in a 1-5 scale. At 5% accuracy, this will be 3.0 ± 0.15 bringing the lower limit to 2.85 and the upper limit to 3.15. The resultant statistics are summarized in the tables below.

Table 2: Information Acquisition descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q 1	150	1	5	3.73	1.016
Q 2	150	1	5	3.01	1.381
Q 3	150	1	5	3.30	1.263
Q 4	150	4	5	4.14	.348
Q 5	150	1	5	3.78	.750
Valid N (list wise)	150				

Source: Primary Data

Q1 to Q5 in the questionnaire sought to assess the perceived information acquisition position of the SMEs according to their entrepreneurs. Q1 thus addressed the entrepreneurs’ perception of the aggressiveness of their SME in collecting information from their environment. Q2 asked whether the SMEs only gathered information in response to specific events, problems or crises. Q3 asked the respondents whether their SMEs extensively monitored their external environment. Q4 asked the respondents whether they agreed that their SMEs were provided necessary

opportunities for individual training. Q5 asked the respondents whether their where people in the organization who offered necessary guidance on their careers.

Table 2 above shows that Q4 had the highest mean showing that a large majority of the respondents agree on the ability of their SMEs to provide opportunities for individual training. The least mean (3.01) was for Q2 which asked whether SMEs gathered information for specific events, problems or crises. Generally, all the average responses were higher than the expected chance score of 3.0.

The next indicator variable was information sharing situation in the organization. To understand this on the perspective of SME entrepreneurs, the researcher relied on Q6 to Q16. Q6 asked the respondents to describe their commitment to sharing information in their work places. A high number of the respondents (77.3%) stated that they agreed that they were a high commitment among entrepreneurs to share information. The results from these Questions were summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Commitment to Information Sharing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	9	6.0	6.0	10.0
	3	11	7.3	7.3	17.3
	4	116	77.3	77.3	94.7
	5	8	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

ET depends on the participations of individuals within the organization to generate knowledge. Entrepreneurs are the greatest source of such information. A high percentage of respondents who were committed to sharing information were therefore a good pointer that SMEs in Oman and the GCC at large were training organizations.

Q7, Q8, Q10 and Q12 were follow up questions to Q6. The researcher relied on these questions to understand the extent in which knowledge was shared by entrepreneurs in the SMEs in Oman. Q7 the respondents were asked to state whether they sought different opinions from their colleagues to solve problems in their organization. 65.3% of the respondents agree that they sought different opinions from colleagues to solve problems in their place of work while 11.3% strongly agreed that they sought opinions of colleagues to solve problems in their organization. Cumulatively 76.6 % of the respondents agreed that they shared knowledge to solve problems in their places of work. Table 4 below provides summary of the response to Q7.

Table 4: Respondents Seek Different Opinions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	4.7	4.7	4.7
	2	10	6.7	6.7	11.3
	3	18	12.0	12.0	23.3
	4	98	65.3	65.3	88.7
	5	17	11.3	11.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Q8; respondents were asked whether they agreed that their organization constantly benchmarked with their competitors. Benchmarking is one technique that organizations can rely upon to gather information from external participants. 62 percent of the respondents agree that their organization relied on benchmarking to gather information through benchmarking while 24.7% were not sure whether benchmarking took place in their organization or not. The results of the responses to Q8 are summarized in table 5 below.

Table 5: Our SME Benchmarks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	14	9.3	9.3	9.3
	2	2	1.3	1.3	10.7
	3	37	24.7	24.7	35.3
	4	93	62.0	62.0	97.3
	5	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Q10; respondents were asked to agree whether they shared work related information with one another or not with their colleagues. 79.3 percent of the participants agree that they constantly shared work related information with their colleagues. However a significant percentage (10%) of the respondents and 10.7 % of the respondents disagreed that they constantly shared information related to work in their places of work. Moreover, none of the respondent strongly agreed to the statement. The summary of the results from Q10 are summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Sharing work related knowledge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	15	10.0	10.0	10.0
	3	16	10.7	10.7	20.7
	4	119	79.3	79.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Q12; sought to know whether lessons learned by one group or one department were actively shared to other groups/departments in the organization. 4% of the respondents stated that they strongly disagree that the lessons learned in one department was actively shared in the whole organization. 11.3 % of the respondents were not sure whether lessons from one group were actively shared within the organization. However, a significant number (80%) of the respondents agreed that information learnt in one department or group were actively shared to other entrepreneurs within the organization. The summary to the responses to Q12 are posed in table 7 below.

Table 7: Information learned in one group actively shared

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	7	4.7	4.7	8.7
	3	17	11.3	11.3	20.0
	4	97	64.7	64.7	84.7
	5	23	15.3	15.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

In questions 11, 13 and 14 the researcher sought to understand the knowledge availability among SMEs. Q11 asked the respondents whether they agreed that ET information were readily available to entrepreneurs for use. The summary to the results on Q11 are in Table 8 below. It was determined that 73.3 percent of the respondents agree that information was available in their places of work for training. Moreover, 9.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that information was readily available in their organizations for training.

Table 8: ET information readily accessible.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	2.7	2.7	2.7
	2	10	6.7	6.7	9.3
	3	12	8.0	8.0	17.3
	4	110	73.3	73.3	90.7
	5	14	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Q13 asked the respondents whether they knew how to access information that they might need from the organization. The results are shown in Table 9 below. The results did not show special weight towards whether or not the respondent agreed or not. 48.7 percent of the respondents disagreed whether they knew where to gather information in the organization while 44% of the respondents agreed that they were aware of where to generate information they required from the organization. Therefore the number of respondents who agreed and those who did not agree were approximately evenly distributed.

Table 9: Respondents know where to access information from the organization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	24	16.0	16.0	16.0
	2	49	32.7	32.7	48.7
	3	11	7.3	7.3	56.0
	4	55	36.7	36.7	92.7
	5	11	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Q14; Asked whether entrepreneurs agreed that the SMEs had made available files and databases to their entrepreneurs to refer on as means of generating information to carry out their duties effectively. The results were summarized in table 10 below. From the table we see that 52.7% of the respondents agreed that their organizations stored important information in databases and

files for future references. However, 12.7% of the respondents were not sure whether or not their organizations stored important information in files and databases for future references.

Table 10: Knowledge stored in files and databases for references

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	11	7.3	7.3	7.3
	2	41	27.3	27.3	34.7
	3	19	12.7	12.7	47.3
	4	79	52.7	52.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Q16 asked the respondents whether they believed that their organizations learned from their mistakes and made the necessary corrections. The results from these questions are summarized in table 11 below. The researcher determined that 64.7% of the respondents agreed that their organizations learned from their mistakes. Only 1.3% of the respondents strongly agreed to this statement. Moreover, 10% and 10% strongly disagreed and disagreed to this statement respectively.

Table 11: Our Organization learns from our mistakes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	10.0	10.0	10.0
	2	15	10.0	10.0	20.0
	3	21	14.0	14.0	34.0
	4	97	64.7	64.7	98.7
	5	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Questions 17 to 22 assessed entrepreneurs' perception of their productivity with respect to the ET situation in their workplaces. Q17 asked the view on the status of the current EFP in their SMEs. Q18 respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that their work organization was efficient. Q19 asked the respondents to what extent they felt committed to their work places. Q20 asked the respondents to what extent they believed that the customer complaints had reduced. Q21 asked the entrepreneurs to what extent they were prepared to go an extra mile to meet organization's productive needs. Finally, entrepreneurs were asked to what

extent they believed the number of customers served by their organization increased. The results were summarized in Table 12 below.

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Q 17	150	3.88	.090	1.105	1.220
Q 18	150	3.69	.079	.963	.928
Q 19	150	3.38	.081	.988	.975
Q 20	150	3.31	.086	1.049	1.100
Q 21	150	3.43	.083	1.012	1.025
Q 22	150	3.90	.055	.673	.453
Valid N (list wise)	150				

Source: Primary Data

The mean responses for all the questions were found to be greater than the expected score of 3. The highest mean was Q22 which asked whether the entrepreneurs believed that the number of entrepreneurs they served had increased.

4.1.1 A Correlation Matrix of the indicator variables

Table 13 provides a summary of a correlation analysis of EFP and information acquisition. We realized that there is a positive correlation between EFP (EP) and information acquisition (I_A). The Pearson Correlation coefficient is 0.115 which shows a weak correlation between the two variables. Moreover, the two-tailed p-value for the two variables is 0.161. The test statistic is not significant at 0.05 significance level. Hence we do not reject the claim that there is no correlation between information acquisition in an organization and EFP.

		I_A	E_P
I_A	Pearson Correlation	1	.115
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.161
	N	150	150
E_P	Pearson Correlation	.115	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.161	
	N	150	150

Source: Primary Data

The correlation between EFP and information sharing and storage (I_S) is summarized in Table 14 below. The results show a weak positive correlation between EFP and I_S. The correlation matrix is 0.185. The p-value is 0.23 which is significant as 0.05 levels. Hence we reject the hypothesis that there is no correlation between information sharing and storage and EFP.

		E_P	I_S
TEP	Pearson Correlation	1	.185*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	N	150	150
I_S	Pearson Correlation	.185*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	N	150	150

Source: Primary Data

Table 15 provides a summary of a correlation between entrepreneur age and EFP. The result shows a positive correlation between age and productivity in SMEs. The Pearson Correlation coefficient for the two variables is 0.197. This shows a weak positive correlation between the two variables. The p-value for the correlation is 0.015 which is significant at 0.05 significance levels. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between age and EFP.

		E_P	AGE
E_P	Pearson Correlation	1	.197*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015
	N	150	150
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.197*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	
	N	150	150

Source: Primary Data

4.1.2 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis is summarized in table 16 below. The dependent Variable is EFP while the independent variables were hypothesized to be age, information acquisition and information storage and sharing.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.212	3	.404	2.652	.051 ^b
	Residual	22.250	146	.152		
	Total	23.462	149			

- a. Dependent Variable: E_P
- b. Predictors: (Constant), I_S, AGE, I_A

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.147	.314		13.216	.000
	AGE	.011	.031	.029	.348	.728
	I_A	.020	.062	.029	-.328	.743
	I_S	.192	.078	.210	2.451	.015

The resultant regression line would thus be $E_P = K + b_1Age + b_2I_A + b_3I_S + E$
 $E_P = K + 0.11(age) + 0.02(I_A) + 0.192(I_S) + 0.51$

4.2 Discussion of Results

The study focused on determining the possible implication of ET and their organizational productivity. The researcher developed a conceptual framework that determined two common aspects of all types of ET; information acquisition and information sharing and storage.

The first part of the analysis was to carry out a brief demographic analysis of the sampled data. It was determined that 78.7 percent of the respondents were male while 21.3 percent were female. This result was in line with previous demographic research carried out by other scholars on the gender definition of Omani SME industries. Scholars such as () argued that there was no gender equity in the employment of women in financial institutions in the GCC.

Secondly the researcher reviewed the age description of the sample. It was determine that 15.3% of the respondents belonged to 20-25 years age group. Moreover 36.0 percent of the respondents belonged to the 26-35 years age group. While 20.7% of the respondents belonged to the age

bracket 36-50 years. Finally, 28% of the respondents fall in the age bracket of over 51 years of age. The least percentage of the respondents fell in the age group of 20-25 years. This could be due to the situation that most SME entrepreneurs in that age group were at entry levels of their Entrepreneurship career and would not have rose to the management position. However, this study focused on entrepreneurs who had management roles in their SMEs.

4.2.1 ET in Omani SMEs

The study revealed that a high number of respondents appreciated the level of ET in Omani SMEs. All the average responses from the five questions that were relied upon to review the situation of ET in Omani SMEs were higher than the expected score of 3.0. This showed that a high percentage of the respondents believed that there was a significant level of ET in their institutions. Moreover, all the respondents agreed that their institutions provided opportunities for individual development other than formal training.

These findings proved that Omani SMEs had appreciated the importance of incorporating ET as part of their corporate culture. However, for ET to succeed it must have a clear value proposition to both entrepreneurs and the organization at large. Entrepreneurs need to understand the correlation between ET and their professional goals. Thus studies have shown that ambitious entrepreneurs interested in growing their careers and furthering the SME interests is more sensitive to ET strategies of an organization. Organizations that are able to foster a training culture will be able to boost entrepreneur skills and job satisfaction enabling the workers to meet their set goals.

4.2.2 Correlation between information acquisition and EFP in the Omani SMEs

The second objective of this research was to carry out a correlation between information acquisition and EFP. To determine this correlation we relied on SPSS to carry out a correlation analysis of the two variables. The Pearson Correlation coefficient was determined to be 0.115. The coefficient of correlation points that there is a weak positive correlation between the two variances. However, this correlation was not determined to be significant at 0.05 significance levels since it had a p-value of 0.161. The researcher could therefore not confidently state whether information acquisition influenced EFP or did not. Therefore the results from this study would not be confidently inferred to the whole GCC member countries.

4.2.3 Correlation between age and EFP in the SMEs

The SMEs in Oman is one of the fastest changing sectors in the service industry. The changes in the industry require great level of information and at times massive experience to help in problem solution. Moreover, ET is an important tool that entrepreneurs rely upon to innovate new ways of tackling problems in the SMEs.

The researcher believed that age comes with experience and that elderly SME entrepreneurs are exposed the most with SMEs ET infrastructure. As such entrepreneurs are more effective handling their management duties. The result of the correlation analysis proved the belief of the researcher. The Pearson Correlation coefficient for the two variables was determined to be 0.197. This result shows a weak positive correlation between entrepreneur age and EFP. However, the researcher's argument of a correlation between age and EFP is confirmed. The two-tailed p-value of the correlation between the two variables is 0.015 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The researcher thus determined that the correlation between age and EFP is significant.

4.2.4 Correlation between EFP and information sharing and storage

Based on the conceptual framework developed by the researcher on the basis of literature review, information sharing and storage was believed to be an important component of ET. The researcher sought to determine how it will be able to influence entrepreneur production in the SMEs. To understand this phenomenon the researcher asked the participants about their perception on knowledge sharing, whether their organizations stores knowledge and whether that knowledge is accessible in situations of need. Further, participants were asked whether they believed that their organizations were able to rely on the knowledge learned from their mistakes to make better decisions in the future.

The results were analyzed using SPSS and summarized in Table 15 above. The results showed a weak positive correlation with a Pearson Correlation coefficient of 0.197. The table further carried out a significance test to assess the significance of this correlation. We determined that based on the sample space and the significance level of 0.05, the results were significant with a p-value of 0.015. Therefore, the researcher confirmed that the correlation between information sharing and storage and EFP had a statistically significant positive correlation.

4.2.5 Correlation between ET and EFP

The researcher modelled a simple linear regression model to determine the correlation between ET and EFP. ET aspects such as information acquisition and information gathering and storage were considered. Moreover, the researcher included entrepreneur age in the model since it was determined that age had a statistically significant correlation with EFP. To determine the statistically significance of the researcher relied on the ANOVA table included in Table 26 above. The F statistic for the model is 2.652 and it is statistically with $p=0.05$ at 0.05 significance level.

However, a further review of the significance of individual coefficients of the variables points that some variables are not statistically significant. The coefficient of age and information acquisition are not statistically significant in the regression model with $p=0.728$ and 0.743 respectively at 0.05 significance levels. The researcher therefore fails to determine their

statistical influence in the regression model. The researcher thus proposes further review to detect aspects of the two variables that influence their significance to the regression model.

It has stated above that the main reason for carrying out this research work was to find out the level of the correlation between ET in the SMEs in Oman. The researcher relied on 20 commercial SMEs that are based in Oman. The SMEs were used to determine how ET influences the productivity of entrepreneurs in the GCC countries. The researcher relied on the data that was gathered from the entrepreneurs of SMEs. Such entrepreneurs were determined as entrepreneurs who have managed the SMEs for the period of less than five years.

Skerlavaj & Dimovski (2006) developed a study whose aim was to determine the correlation between ET and performance in insurance firms. The research is consistent with the research of other studies that were quoted above with the said issue. The results pointed at a significant correlation between ET and EFP in organizations based in Slovenia and Croatia. The results further agreed with the results from the initial researcher who argued that there was a significant positive correlation between ET and the performance of companies in institutions of higher training. The researcher identified that 70 % of the studied relied on the study by Norton (2007). Norton and fellow scholars determined that there was an important performance among organizations that provided higher education in Pakistan. According to the research work that was previously done 73% of the population under survey SMEs in the whole GCC. Khan, M. A. (2013) findings of the study confirmed that organization influenced the performance and the perception of entrepreneurs. This conclusion was confirmed by this research work. Further, the research work from the research study was determined in terms of the percentage level of performance among the SMEs in Oman.

The study by the researcher made a confirmation that entrepreneur perception would affect EFP in an organization. This assumption was similar to the works of Cummings and Worley (2008). The organizers believed that ET would improve the performance in organizations. Kaplan & Norton (2007) identified that there were research studies that led to financial measures alone and that was not reliable predictors to the performance of the organizations. Further, Kaplan and the research team determined that there studies alone was not determinants for SMEs performance.

Kaplan determined the importance of financial measures in carrying out was not sufficient variable that predict the performance of an organization. The perspective was in conformity of Hernaus et al (2008) who attempted to prove that financial ways of measurement was the weakest route to link ET with EFP. The research by the scholars determined that it was not scientifically easy to explain entrepreneur performance without discussing EFP. The research determined that there were financial and non-financial ways of measuring SMEs performance. The financial performance includes an analysis of financial ratios such as the ROE, ROA etc. however; there are non-financial performance measures that are used to predict the variables for ET. The study thus relied on the variables and the variables that were the basis of the study. The

researcher also determined that financial methods of measuring performance only contributed to about 43%. However, previous measures determined that non-financial measures contributed to over 57.13 % of the overall performance results. The numeric results were in complement to the conclusion by Hernau et al. (2008). The results were a significant compliment to the findings of Hernaus who argued that SMEs performance is wider in terms of concept than financial performance and profits. Hernaus and his colleagues identified that there were cognitive dimensional changes that were significantly and very strongly influential to the performance of the SMEs performance. The scholars further were in agreement that two variables would lead to improved entrepreneur performance in cases where an SME is working on changes that are conditioned to take care of economic turbulence in the environment. On the other hand, the research concludes the training and development that is viewed as the strongest determinant of EFP (Khan, M. A. (2015).

On the other hand, the research workers in the SME agreed that entrepreneur education and development was the most reliable means of training and development that the researcher relied upon. Entrepreneur education and development was determined as the strongest factor that improves the levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities which in turns will lead to higher EFP.

However, the direct influence of training is not directly explained. Moreover the correlation between training and development is not directly organized in the workforce. Therefore, the researcher determined lack of agreement among several studies and the research in this project in reaching a definition of ET which is reliable in predicting SMEs or EFP.

Moreover, lack of consensus in previous studies that were reviewed by the researcher encouraged us to carry on with this study. The researcher thus was detrimental in ensuring that ET was the most dependable aspect of ET. The results from the study by Hernaus et al. revealed that an average of 3.48 agreed that there was synergy. The result was proportional to that of the SMEs in the GCC. The researcher thus observed that the degree of entrepreneur involvement and participation in the decision making process and operation was not recommendable. Moreover, the researcher also identified that the level of entrepreneur commitment and participation in key decision making in regards to an organization process and operations. This would imply a less motivated workforce which leads to the lowering of the overall performance index of a firm.

This view has been shared by

Hernaus et al. (2008) who observed that possible lack of communication and entrepreneur empowerment led to lower level of understanding of major problems in the SME and the SME's strategic orientation, which in turn translated to moderate improvement in the quality of the SME's products and services. The overall implication is that improving training in organizations using effective communication and more organized work and well-coordinated work processes will result in gross improvement of an organization "performance.

The study also found that firms invested more in training and development aspect which contributed most to the ET of companies. However there was little evidence of integration and optimal utilization of the accrued knowledge, skills and competences in the higher levels of SMEs strategic planning and action. This view was supported by Fiol & Lyles (1985), Senge (1990) and Garvin (1993) to the extent that training, through better knowledge and understanding, facilitates behaviour change that leads to improved performance. According to Hernaus, Skerlavaj & Dimovski (2008), innovation and improvement of products, services and processes will be generated by a team of re-skilled entrepreneurs, superior information technology and aligned SMEs procedures. These can be realized through continuous efforts on training and development of an organization's workforce.

Kontoghiorghes & Bryant (2004) in a survey of health care industry also demonstrated that training was an important action lever for building a committed, innovative and competitive workforce. They determined that training was crucial in the development of highly trained, knowledgeable and competent workforce. Ultimately, integration into an organization's systems and implementation is key without which, the concept of ET remains just as Kaplan & Norton (2001) puts it, "The foundation of strategy".

5. FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to establish the implication of ET and EFP in the GCC countries. However, due to resources and time constraints the researcher could not move around all the GCC countries to conduct the survey. Thus, the researcher settled on a case survey of commercial SMEs in the Sultanate of Oman. The results the researcher argues can be inferred to all the GCC countries due to their similarities in economic factors.

The researcher found from this study that entrepreneurs appreciated the importance of ET in productivity improvement. This result is consistent with previous studies that identified ET as an important factor in the growth of commercial SMEs in the GCC (). However, the researcher determined that some aspects of ET such as information acquisition were comparatively less significant because they showed a significance level of 0.752 based on 0.05 significance level test.

Therefore commercial SMEs in the GCC should endeavour to take into considerations views and opinions of every entrepreneur in at all levels. Such actions according to this study would bring forth tangible productive improvement on the work done by entrepreneurs.

6. CONCLUSION

The research work concludes that there exists a positive correlation between ET and EFP. Particularly, the researcher found that there was a positive correlation between factors promoting ET; information acquisition and information storage and sharing, and EFP. Moreover, the

researcher identified a significant correlation between entrepreneurs' age and their productivity. This finding may be supported by previous studies that state that generative leaning contributes more to entrepreneur productive training. Therefore, one way of improving EFP is increasing the level of ET in the SMEs in the GCC.

The regression analysis results confirmed that information storage and sharing affect entrepreneur performance through its ability of making entrepreneurs have access to knowledge that would aid them in their duties as well as decision making. The descriptive statistics data showed that all the respondents who participated in this survey accepted that their organizations provided them with training opportunities to improve their skills and experiences.

Moreover, this study finds out that most commercial SMEs in the Sultanate of Oman embraced ET or aspects of ET. Moreover, the research is important to policy makers who are looking at areas of improving ET within commercial SMEs in the GCC at large. The study also contributes to the body of empirical studies on the correlation between ET and EFP. It should be noted that this study provides empirical data that confirms a model of a positive implication of ET and EFP in the GCC.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysed research and the conclusions that we arrived at in the above section, the researcher puts forth several recommendations that are contained in this section. These recommendations, the researcher believes can be relied upon by the management in organizations in the GCC to improve their entrepreneurs and by extension their organizations. Moreover, these recommendations will make it easier to develop clear strategic plans that will ensure entrepreneurs work in a committed work to help them achieve the organization goals.

The researcher recommends that entrepreneur should actively and appropriately involved together with their supervisors in the decision making as well as include them in the process of developing and reviewing SMEs strategy and policies. This strategy will allow the SME benefit from the knowledge, skills and experiences gained from ET to bring further development and growth to the institution. The need for team work and group training can therefore not be overemphasized and all entrepreneurs should be encouraged to share their ideas.

This study rightly highlights the importance of training in increasing the productivity of organizations and entrepreneurs in particular. SME managers should encourage their workers to enrol for continuous training to improve their skills, innovative capability and to expand the organization's knowledge resource. The SMEs in Oman and by extension the entire GCC is currently facing dynamic changes. To survive in such scenarios, SMEs must continuously learn to develop new methods of facing new challenges as well as developing new strategies to reach more customers. Such knowledge would therefore be a great source of competitive advantage.

Motivation is an important factor that influences the productivity of an entrepreneur. It would not be practical for an entrepreneur who is under motivated to optimally benefit from ET. Previous scholars have identified those entrepreneurs who lack motivation in their places of work will likely underperform. Motivation should also be viewed in with respect to entrepreneurs' personal and career goals. Moreover, entrepreneurs should embrace ET. ET encourages sharing and storage of vital knowledge and skills in the organization. It is dangerous for example in scenarios where only one entrepreneur has an important skill depended upon by the organization. In that scenario there might be inadequate resources to train new entrepreneurs in case the person leaves or becomes compromised by the competition. Entrepreneurs in the GCC should therefore invest in developing a talented workforce. One way of developing a talented workforce is exposing them to ET so that that they are able to learn in their working environment.

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