

Ten years of in-depth growth contribution by ADVETI in the vocational education system of the UAE

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Abstract— ADVETI is investing in the youth education system so that the UAE does not have to rely on foreign labor [1]. ADVETI has been considered a significant component in the diversification of the economy of Abu Dhabi since it has a lower dependence on the oil and gas industry. ADVETI has a higher focus on service industries. ADVETI maintains a vision of developing itself as the hallmark for vocational and technical training and education in the UAE. The mission of the organization is to empower youths or Emiratis to develop to their competencies so that they can play a crucial role in the future enhancement of the labor market through a workplace focus on lifelong vocational and technical training and education [2].

Index Terms ADVETI, Abu Dhabi Vocational Education & Training Institute, ACTVET, Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical & Vocational Education & Training, NQA, National Qualification Authority, VETAC, Vocational Education and Training Awards Council.

1 Introduction

Vocational education is also referred to as work related practical education. Vocation education and training is offered to students with the aim of improving their skills and knowledge useful in the working environment. This paper was written to review the vocational education progress in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI) was formed to facilitate the development of skills and improve skilled labor in the country. ADVETI was formulated under Decree Law No. 25 in the year 2007, and it was formed as a directive from the President of UAE and Abu Dhabi rulers, which was later signed by Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan [1]. ADVETI was formed under Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical & Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET) and it was licensed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Since the inception of ADVETI, there have been major achievements in terms of efficient skilled labor markets especially in technical work environment. ADVETI has developed, improved and implemented strategies that are used to ensure that vocational training offered in the region is of high value to the trainees. UAE government has made it a priority to improve the employability skills of the young Emiratis through the vocational education and training. As a result, the government of UAE provides wide

range of educational services to students from Kindergarten to higher educational levels. The government has also been very keen in promoting private education by establishment of educational operations. ADVETI has also significantly improved the development of the economy via establishment of strategies that have led to improvement and shaping of graduates' ambitions [3]. In addition, vocational training has had a positive impact in the development of national skills that are appropriate in the workforce structure in Abu Dhabi [4].

2 Research Objectives

The following objectives were developed to help understand the importance of developing ADVETI in terms of endorsing technical and vocational training among students seeking employment.

- To assess contributions of ADVETI in Abu Dhabi's vision
- To examine the growth of vocational education and training in UAE
- To analyze strategies put in place to improve vocational education and training

2.1 Background

Vocational Education Training

UAE spends 24% of the total expenditure on education sector by training the citizens [21]. General and vocational education in UAE has gained much attention in the over

the years because employers seek employees equipped with essential skills. The first vocational institute in UAE was built by British government in 1958 and it specialized in teaching mechanical, building trades and electrical skills [21]. The Vocational training in UAE changed in 1971 when UAE gained independence. In 1980s, the introduction of Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) led to the growth of vocational education [21]. Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) was established by the Ministry of higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) in 2000 to certify the authenticity of vocational training institutes. As a result of this move, UAE as of 2015 had 73 higher education institute, with 10 of them offering degree and vocational education and training programs [21]. UAE government introduced emiritization, an affirmative policy aimed at ensuring private sectors employ UAE nationals [22]. The employment quotas on different business sectors as enforced by UAE government policies ensured that private sectors failure to comply lead to financial penalties [22].

Further, Abu Dhabi center for technical and vocational education and training (ACTVET) was established to promote vocational training [21]. The body introduced Emirates Skills program and World Skills competition, which aims to encourage the promotion of vocational education and training in different countries. Various collaborations with different companies have led to sponsorship programs and employment assurance for students in vocational training institutes [21]. Other bodies formed to improve and oversee quality of vocational training in UAE include technical and vocational education and training (TVET), National qualifications authority (NQA), and National Institute for Vocational Education. Strategies such as vision 2020, signing memorandum with companies and ensuring all vocational training are approved by organizing bodies have facilitated growth of vocational training. HCT, ADVETI and UAE University among others are common vocational training centers in UAE. This research paper has focused on ADVETI.

Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI)

ADVETI is considered as the most successful vocational training facility in UAE. ADVETI is comprised of seven institutions, with each focusing on training students to meet certain industrial standards. The ADVETI vocational training institutes have been in operation since 2007. Over the years, the ADVETI has been in the frontline in providing useful and quality training to the students. The organiza-

tion has also developed major strategies that have led to increased quality of skilled labor in the UAE, which has led to realization of economic goals.

One of the major contributions of ADVETI was development of vocational training system. The system is used in training the students and it has been crucial in producing qualified individuals that have led to development of the economy in UAE [3]. The vocational training system developed by ADVETI emphasizes on; applying theoretical knowledge in work environment, ensuring practical education are offered to the students and offering skills that are useful in work environment. The aim of the system is to develop students who can perform various roles in the working environment efficiently with minimum supervision.

ADVETI has also been useful in offering training to students who have not achieved pass mark to attend higher learning [5]. In many cases, students who do not meet set targets to advance their studies in colleges or universities end up frustrated and they might not achieve much without training. Therefore, ADVETI has been useful in equipping them with skills that are required in working industry. This has led to improved quality of graduates as well as improved educational goals within the UAE region [4].

ADVETI faculty members have also been developing strategies aimed at offering high quality education and training to the students. The members use supervision to ensure that developed strategies are well implemented. ADVETI follows the NQA standards to measure the quality of skills offered to the students. The National Qualifications Authority (NQA) standards are useful in ensuring that the skills equipped to the students from the institutions are useful in industries [6]. In addition to offering training, ADVETI focuses on improving the communication skills of the students. They, therefore, offer English language lessons, which are aimed at improving the communication in working environment. Communication is also crucial as most students are offered chances to intern in international companies.

ADVETI introduced the idea of offering students work placements and internship opportunities. The aim of offering students internship opportunities is to help them gain experience in real life working environment as well as offering them a chance to apply what they have learned in work. ADVETI offers students both national and international internship opportunities. This kind of exposure is

crucial as it enables the student to apply their learned skills in work while still gaining new skills and experiences [7]. Some of the major countries that ADVETI is associated with include France and United Kingdom, which have been in the forefront of offering internship programs [7]. Students are given opportunity to interact with international firms and acquire skills that are later on used to help grow the Abu Dhabi economy.

Further, ADVETI developed platforms that can be used by students and investors to promote vocational training. Such platforms include holding and sponsoring conferences or educational programs that give students an opportunity to showcase their abilities. An example of such program is the “Yes to Work” initiative. These platforms have been instrumental in ensuring that there is appropriate and sufficient information, advice and guidance about the course of study that students express interest in, when they join an institution.

2.2 Historical Changes to ADVETI

UAE government formed ADVETI with the intention of helping realize the economic goals set for the region. The 2016-2020 vision set by the UAE government had also focused on building efficient and qualified workforce. Therefore, forming ADVETI was a stepping stone towards realization of that goal. This because ADVETI’s main objective was to develop and train people who can work in challenging environments. The aim was also to equip students with skills that can be used to forecast problems in market and come up with ways of eliminating such issues [8, 9]. The government also assigned ADVETI with the responsibility of ensuring that vocation training offered in both private and public sectors meet the set standards [10]. As a result, ADVETI introduced five institutes that were aimed at training, advising and offering students skills that are necessary in working environment.

1. Al Jazirah Institute of Science and Technology
2. Al Jaheli Institute of Science and Technology
3. Al Reef Institute of Logistics and Applied Technology
4. Baynounah Institute of Science and Technology
5. Sharjah Institute of Science and Technology

2.3 ADVETI Facts & Figures

Education sector in UAE has continued to grow due to the increased support from the government. The projected size of the education sector is approximately US\$7.31 billion and it expected to grow. Around 24% of the UAE government expenditure is channeled into promoting the education sector. Both private and public training institutions have benefited from the UAE government programs. The first technical training institution in UAE was built by the British government in Sharjah in the year 1958. The institute offered three key courses which were electrical, mechanical and building trades. Vocational training gained popularity when UAE gained independence especially in 1980s after the formation of higher colleges of technology. Despite this growth, the rate of enrollment into the vocational training sectors has been low. However, strategic measures put in place by the government have led to increased number of students in the vocational training sectors, which has led to increase in skilled labor [17]. The increased government support has led to development of; post-secondary technical institutes, fourteen secondary technical schools (STs) and one vocational education development center [19]

The number of students enrolled in the vocation training centers in UAE has continued to grow over the years. For instance, in the year 2015-2016, there were a total of 4,712 students in all eight institutes. The table and the figures below shows the number of students enrolled in the vocational education and training sectors in UAE.

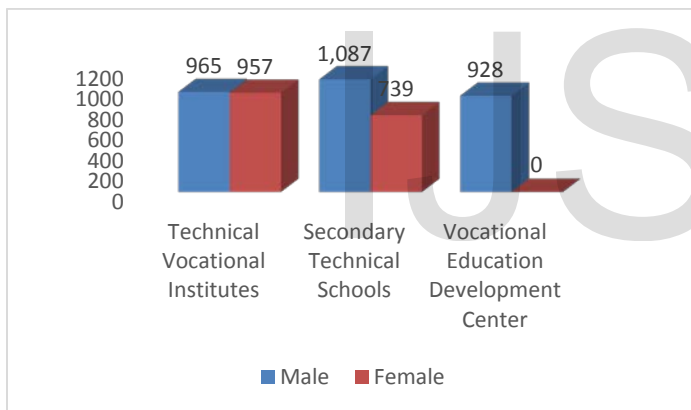
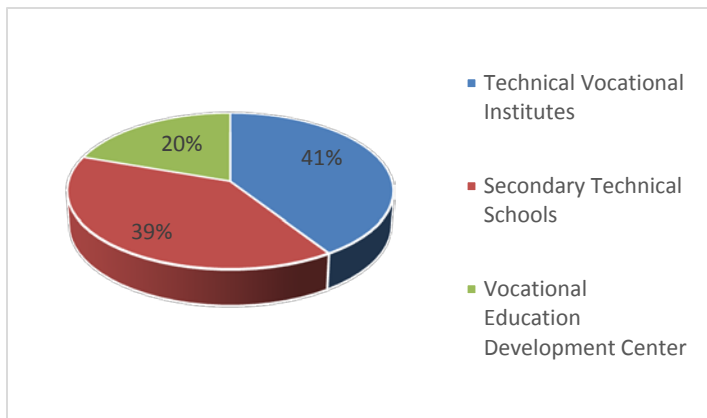
Name of the campuses	Students	
	Male	Female
<i>Technical Vocational Institutes</i>	965	957
	Total	1,922
<i>Secondary Technical Schools</i>	1,087	739
	Total	1,862

<i>Vocational Education Development Center</i>	Male	Female
	928	0
Total		928

- Higher Diploma,
- Continuous Education (CE)
- Various corporate programs.

ADVETI's STSs provide Grade 12 high school certificate programs, and the vocational education development center provides NQA Level 3 Certificates [12]. In addition to its three campuses in Abu Dhabi, ADVETI has expanded its campuses into other regions of the UAE to include Sharjah, RAK, Dubai, AJM, FUJ, Al Ain, Delma Island and Baynounah (the western region).

The changes made by ADVETI have enabled the trained graduates to seek employment opportunities and they have also increased their chances of being hired. The above mentioned institutes and courses are offered through ADVETI to ensure that individuals graduating from the institutes are qualified enough and ready to work in the available industries [10]. The structure followed by ADVETI has been successful in ensuring that even the academically privileged students access the technical courses. The standards set by the ADVETI staffs and NQA have ensured that customized vocational education is offered to the students [2]. This is because the available technical courses offered in the ADVETI's institutes are tailored towards modeling the students understand and specialize in certain line of industry. As a result, the students end up acquiring high quality training that is useful in the working environment. Additionally, ADVETI students are trained in both theoretical and practical knowledge, which increases their level of knowledge in the trained industry. Work placement and internship programs offered by ADVETI have ensured that students gain experience from working environment. The changes in ADVETI have led to rise in number of developed skills among young Emirates and diversified the economy.



The number of students that have graduated from ADVETI institutes since its introduction is 7,213. Between years 2010 and 2017, the number of students that graduated from the vocational institutes is 2,341. The STS graduates from year 2014 to 2017 are 3,244 and those that graduated from the vocational education development center between year 2008 and 2017 are 1,538 students [11].

The following are the main programs offered in the post-secondary technical vocational institutes:

- Foundation program (General English),
- Certificate Level 4,
- Diploma,

which was meant to help the students get skills that can be channeled into different industries. The consultations also helped the ADVETI programs to be taught in a way that they meet the industry requirements and the employers' need, which would boost the confidence of both employee and employers.

2.4 ADVETI's ten years of GROWTH in the UAE

This is the tenth year since the formation of ADVETI. In those ten years it has been in operation, major changes have been made especially in the vocational education and training sectors. There has been an increase in number of students pursuing technical courses and labor market is experiencing increased number of qualified individuals. Changes in ADVETI ensured that students get a chance to pursue post-secondary courses using the set up technical institutes. Higher education board increased admission requirements for people to have access to university and college education in 2010 [10]. The decision locked many post-secondary students out of accessing advanced level studies. In retrospective, this decision led to an increased number of students who enrolled in ADVETI and other vocational education institutions.

ADVETI has ensured that the quality of training offered to the students meet the current market standards by frequently reviewing syllabi. The teaching members also go through a rigorous vetting process before they are hired to train in the institutes [4]. This serves as a guarantee that quality training would be offered to the students. ADVETI has also been introducing new programs to meet the labor market demands. Constant review and development of the programs have ensured that most of the graduates from ADVETI are directly assimilated into the job market. For instance, the number of graduates from ADVETI campuses in UAE between years 2010 and 2013 was 4,600. All the students that graduated in that period were directly assimilated into different industries. This meant that the employers in UAE were confident enough with the training offered by ADVETI. As a result, ADVETI was named as the most successful vocational education and training center in the tenth year.

Initially, ADVETI offered training programs in information technology (IT), paralegal studies, design, property management and marketing and project management. With its expansion, ADVETI provided additional training and education in tourism and travel, logistics, engineering technology, industrial technology, environmental studies and business. This expansion has been accomplished in collaboration with the NQA, which began in the year 2010 [14]. Similarly, ADVETI provides English language training and education to employers that have staff with poor linguistic skills.

ADVETI has focused on the following five major objectives to continue as an effective and efficient vocational and technical education provider in Abu Dhabi and across the UAE.

- To extend the secondary and primary education in UAE,
- To ensure access to quality vocational education at all levels,
- To develop a quality educational environment with appropriately qualified staff,
- To establish a system of regular and effective assessment for the students, and
- To assure all programs are performed in an efficient and timely manner [14].

The growth in vocational education and training offered by ADVETI can be attributed to support from different shareholders and UAE government. Over the ten years, ADVETI has led to increased number of qualified individuals ready to work in challenging work environment. This has led to growth in labor market and overall growth in economy.

2.5 Role of operations and support services in the growth of vocational education

Vocational education in UAE has been promoted by establishment of certain policies and creating bodies to enforce the policies. For instance, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) center was formed to pro-

mote vocational education through collaboration with international bodies [15]. In addition, vocational education and training awards council (VETAC) was formed to help formulate education standards and set skills that are useful in the job market. The NQA has also been useful in setting standards that are useful in ensuring what students are taught in training centers meet the set strategic objectives of UAE [16].

Abu Dhabi center for technical and vocational education and training (ACTVET) was established in the year 2010. The sole purpose of establishing ACTVET was to regulate the education sector offered by vocational institutes in UAE. Another objective of ACTVET was to increase the number of students enrolling in the vocational training centers, which would increase their chances of raising money through employment [17]. The strategies put in place by these bodies have ensured that the Emiratis who only had primary level education get a chance to acquire vocational training. Consequently, the government has increased the independence level of such people by providing them with technical skills that are useful in industries.

The UAE labor market also relies on ADVETI to provide them with skilled laborers by offering vocational education and training, which would help in meeting the demanded labor. The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) collaborated with these institutes to establish standards and policies providing guidance to the accredited and licensed ACTVET/NQA in the UAE. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of skilled Emirate youths who are capable of gaining proper employment and a chance of life-long development [18]. Apart from ACTVET's role as a regulatory authority, since 2010, NQA has also supported the growth of vocational education in the UAE. The objectives are as follows.

- a. To coordinate with the different campuses of vocational education and training and to regulate their training systems
- b. To develop and implement the qualification framework for young Emiratis [11]

- c. To facilitate the shift or continuity of individual learning through different training pathways
- d. To contribute to an enhancement of vocational training and education in the UAE

The cooperation between UAE government and developed bodies designed to monitor vocational education has led to increase in qualified laborers. The coordination amongst such bodies and interaction with international organizations has also ensured that students studying in vocational centers and technical institutes get diverse and high quality training [3].

3 Future Strategic Growth Plan of ADVETI

- The ADVETI's vision is to be the benchmark of vocational education and technical training in the UAE. The mission is to empower the Emiratis with competencies that are useful in nation building and future development through offering technical training and workplace focused skills [10]. The institute was formed under six core values; innovation, teamwork, compassion, integrity, respect and excellence. The organization has continued to develop strategies that are aimed at improving the quality of training. The following is list of strategies that have been put in place by ADVETI.
- To identify the list of primary schools first
- To increase the participation of young Emiratis in ADVETI
- To increase the number of Diploma graduates
- All training/teaching staff must have training qualifications licenses by 2021
- To meet 2016-2020 targets to develop employment opportunities for the future and current students [15]
- To double the number of ADVETI student enrollments by 2020
- To improve the practices of the administrative and teaching staffs by 2020
- To increase the number of Emirati teachers in ADVETI
- To optimize ADVETI's operational costs [13]
- To stabilize the cost per student and implement suitable national practices in ADVETI
- To increase external stakeholder support

Optimizing the operational costs in line with the best practices on a national level is the strategic objective of ADVETI. Therefore, ADVETI aim at maximum utilization of the

available resources to ensure that students are not burdened with many expenses. In addition, this will significantly reduce cost per student, which would improve the return value. ADVETI also have a strategic plan in place where, by 2020, the number of stakeholders supporting them will be increased. The idea of increasing the number of courses offered in ADVETI institutes offered students wide range of choices. This opened up chances for other industries such as aviation and tourism to grow. As a result of increased demand of skilled labor in the two sectors, the young Emiratis trained in the institutions will have an opportunity to make a living. The current changes of introducing new studies in the ADVETI's institutes show how dynamic, flexible and progressive the organization is in responding to the market needs.

The strategic plan developed by ADVETI in 2016 focused on increasing the number of Emirati students partaking in vocational education and technical problems. The increase in number of students enrolled in the vocation programs translate to increase in number of graduates holding TVET or NQA certifications. As a result, this would increase the number of qualified individuals, and as noted, many of people that study in ADVETI are usually assimilated in the industries as employees.

4 Conclusion

The research has focused on ADVETI as a technical and vocational education and training institution in UAE. This research focused on the contributions that the institution have made to the economy of UAE by training Emiratis and equipping them with skills required in working environment. In addition, the research focused on the strategies, changes and structural changes in vocational training of UAE over the years. This study used ADVETI to discuss some of the major changes in vocational training such as introduction of more training institutes. Additionally, ADVETI has been assessing the economic market of the UAE and making necessary changes in the syllabi and curriculum to accommodate such changes. For instance, ADVETI introduced hospitality and aviation as technical courses in their institutes to help meet the growing demand of skilled labor in such sectors. The research outlined strategies, ob-

jectives and policies that have been put in place by ADVETI to improve education.

The study has also highlighted some of other major bodies that were formed to popularize and assess the quality of education offered in UAE. With the help of UAE government, major bodies such as TVET, ACTVET and NQA have been formed to monitor the quality of technical and vocational training. The UAE government has also offered major resources to ensure that students receive quality education. Cooperation of ADVETI with the industries has helped the students acquire education tailored towards meeting the market needs, which makes them hireable when they graduate from institutes.

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