

EXPLORING THE USE OF A BUSINESS SIMULATION TO TEACH BUSINESS CONCEPTS TO EMIRATI STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is one of the most economically developed countries in the Arab world, based on various parameters such as oil production, gross domestic product (GDP), infrastructure development, and human rights parameters (Obay, 2009). At the same time the UAE depends heavily on expatriate labor to achieve this position (Al-Ali, 2008). There is a concerted effort from government to create more employment opportunities for UAE nationals, especially in the private sector, since only 1% of the private sector employees are UAE nationals (Barhem, Salih, & Yousef, 2008). According to Muysken and Nour (2006), feedback from industry in the UAE is that transfer of knowledge does not occur between what students learn at tertiary institutions and in the workplace. Emirati students entering the workforce from university are perceived to lack the required knowledge, understanding and ability to apply business concepts (Barhem et al., 2008). Preparing students for the workplace therefor requires a renewed focus on the correct educational tools and pedagogy to achieve success. This research mainly focused on student perceptions of the use of a business simulation and its usefulness to learn and apply business concepts. The research study used a qualitative, phenomenological approach to determine the perceptions of Emirati students of the effectiveness of a business simulation to improve their application of business concepts in a real-world environment. The study used a focus group discussion to capture the lived experiences of students who completed a business simulation as part of a course in their degree program. The study indicated that students perceived simulations as a support to understand and apply business concepts.