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**Exploring the Entrepreneurial Landscape in Oman: Discovery of
Students' Awareness of the Government and Its Support System's
Role in Fostering Entrepreneurship in Oman**

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Abstract

The main aim of this research is to assess students' awareness of the government and its support structure's role in promoting entrepreneurship in Oman. This study uses a deductive and quantitative approach. Besides, a descriptive research approach was utilised because it describes the features of the population or topic under study. Moreover, the purposive sampling approach, which utilises non-probability sampling, was chosen as the sampling strategy. The sample was selected on the basis of the researcher's expertise and skills. In this study, a questionnaire developed by Venesaar (2014) was used with adjustments made to ensure validity and reliability. Since all values are greater than 0.05, there is no significant relationship between family income, father's occupation, education, study programme, and students' awareness of the government and its support structure's role in promoting entrepreneurship in Oman. The highest mean score for the government's role and its support structures to promote entrepreneurship in Oman was 'Lack of support and encouragement by authorities is affecting youth entrepreneurial activity (4.33)'. 'Lack of support and encouragement by authorities is affecting youth entrepreneurial activity (0.791)', which was significantly loaded into the first element of the rotated component matrix: I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur (0.810), but I do not have the appropriate technical and practical skills to start my own business (0.875), which are loaded as the second and third highest items in factor analysis.

Keywords: Government Support System, Students Awareness, Entrepreneurship

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1. Introduction

Davidsson & Honig (2003) specified that an individual's immediate environment shapes an individual's attitude. Besides, Robinson et al. (1991) reported that entrepreneurial philosophy or worth relies on the social situation to which a person belongs. Also, Bandura (2012) states that if an individual or student perceives the environmental conditions, such as cultural, environmental, government assistance, and economic support, as favourable to entrepreneurship, their approach towards entrepreneurship development might suit their confidence. Therefore, Peters & Hisrich (2005) stated that environmental factors cannot be overlooked when recognising students' entrepreneurial intentions. Researchers have repeatedly stated that environmental factors, particularly government backing, can improve a person's predisposition to entrepreneurship (Robinson et al., 1991). However, no previous studies investigated the consequences of perceived environmental factors and government support on students' entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes.

Lewis & Massey (2003) declared that the political situation, cultural climate, administrative complexities, and government support measures and procedures are essential in forming individuals' entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, a study conducted by Minniti et al. (2006) described how the subjective perception of the environment rather than the actual atmosphere is believed to be more prominent in determining entrepreneurial intention than the natural environment. In contrast, studies conducted in various countries concluded that students perceive that government support for entrepreneurial ventures is either absent or limited (Transparency International, 2014). Besides, studies conducted in Kenya, Nigeria, and other African nations stated that bureaucratic methods and financial determinants are perceived negatively by students when starting a new business (O'Connor, 2013). Consequently, the resources accessible to an individual determine the possibility of behavioural fulfilment (Ajzen, 2002). Furthermore, Shane & Venkataraman (2000) argued that access to resources such as start-up funds, incentives for a new business, exclusive perks for new start-ups, and government grants for private companies could boost the determination and spirit of those seeking more challenging careers like entrepreneurship. In conclusion, individuals are always encircled by various contextual factors that can pull and push them in distinct directions (Minniti et al., 2006). A combination of both personal considerations (such as personality) and contextual factors (such as perceived government support) may, therefore, develop entrepreneurial intentions (Thomas et al., 2014).

When His Majesty the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said took control of the Renaissance in 1970, he contemplated a stable, self-reliant Oman comprised of enthusiastic, diligent individuals who always endeavoured to achieve the best (Diwakar, 2019). This implies being an integral part of large Omani corporations or launching a new start-up for oneself. The route of the Renaissance was one that everybody in Oman would walk collectively. Like any other Gulf nation, the Sultanate of Oman's economy also relies on oil and gas (Prabhu, 2019). However, Oman traditionally depends on fishing, agriculture, and mining. In the early 1960s, Oman's economic liberalisation policies helped it grow remarkably (Gulf Business, 2013). Many foreign private companies invested primarily in the oil and gas sector, which helped the country advance rapidly (Diwakar, 2019). Due to turbulence in the oil and gas industry, many countries that depend predominantly on oil exports want to diversify their economies (Curtis, 2019). Similarly, Oman started to broaden the economy by strengthening the private sector

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and encouraging individuals to start their own businesses instead of relying on government jobs.

Furthermore, according to Strolla & Peri (2013), the government of Oman adopted many strategies to empower the local community to initiate their own businesses. This practice is unprecedented in the region, as most native people in the GCC generally work in public or semi-government organisations. Although this system worked for many years due to low oil prices and the unemployment rate, governments want to encourage their citizens to focus more on new start-ups. According to the NCSI (2022), 55,491 start-ups were registered in 2013, while that number jumped to 81,460 in 2022. The Oman Tech Fund, supported by Oman's sovereign wealth fund and global start-up accelerator 500 Start-ups, inaugurated a Wadi Accelerator programme in 2017 (Oman Observer, 2017). Wadi Accelerator offers office space, coaches, practice sessions on developing new businesses, marketing, and help with company accounts. Many institutions are set up to finance start-ups in Oman, and these institutions make it easier for SMEs in Oman to obtain finance (Omanuna, 2020).

2. Literature Review

His Majesty the Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said issued a royal directive for the establishment of the fund in accordance with Royal Decree (No. 6/2013) as the culmination of the forum on the development of SMEs, held from January 21–23, 2013, to enable Omani youth to develop their own enterprises. The Sanad programme, Mawareed Alriezq programme, and Rural Woman programme (Islamic Markets, 2020) are three financial programmes included in the fund that help Omani youth build and grow their own small and medium-sized projects. The fund, which is financially and administratively independent, has RO 70 million in capital. Besides, as part of its 9th Five-Year Development Plan 2016-2020, Tanfeedh—National Oman's economic diversification plan (Times News Service, 2016) identified manufacturing, tourism, transport and logistics, mining, and fisheries as viable areas for entrepreneurial diversification and growth. Omani nationals are urged to take part and launch businesses in the aforementioned industries.

Riyada's Entrepreneurs Card is an approved certificate that grants access to various opportunities and amenities, with priority given to the allotment of government procurement contracts (Riyada, 2020). It supports entrepreneurs in launching and developing businesses, overcoming obstacles, and creating a healthy SME ecosystem. Riyada offers consultancy, feasibility studies, mentoring, training, incubation, business centres, and land allotments (Habeeb, 2023). Besides, Oman's SME Development Fund (SMEF), which was established in 2014, is a major development company in Oman, aiming to foster an entrepreneurial culture through funding, training, and regularisation (Oman Observer, 2017). It meets SME division requirements and stimulates entrepreneurship among students, teens, and mature people. The fund promotes entrepreneurship and financing for small and medium businesses, building capacity through educational institutes, coaching, and partnerships with academia, banks, and youth (Yousuf, 2021). In addition, Sharakah is a joint-stock organisation established in 1998 in Oman's Sultanate to provide monetary assistance and post-monetary services to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Oman Observer, 2023). It partners with government and non-government organisations in sectors like manpower, commerce, finance, education, oil, and gas. Its main aim is to fund the development of youth projects. Over the past 20 years,

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Sharakah has helped around 190 SMEs with financing exceeding RO 6 million and supported over 40 start-ups through funding or full support (Habeeb, 2023).

Moreover, the Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (Ithraa) was established in 1996 to generate resources through investment projects and non-oil exports in Oman (Bizri, 2017). Ithraa aims to help Omani organisations thrive in global business and inspire them to think globally. It operates with local companies, provides market knowledge, and organizes international exhibitions, including the successful OPEX exhibitions (Trade Arabia, 2020). Additionally, the National Business Center (NBC), which was established in 2012, supports start-ups, entrepreneurs, and SMEs in Oman. It offers high-tech facilities, entrepreneurial training, and access to markets and industry professionals (Bizri, 2017). NBC also nurtures the Science Traveller Company, offering personal growth and welfare programs combined with engaging tourist events. The organization aims to promote well-being, personal enrichment, and achievement for entrepreneurs and the community.

Furthermore, Al Raffd, a financial company founded in 2013, aims to support entrepreneurial growth in Oman. Since its inception, it has financed 2,563 loans and provided 4,229 job opportunities to Omani youth (Al Farsi, 2015). The fund also supports SMEs and entrepreneurs, promoting "goodness for all" during Ramadan by advertising a catalogue featuring SMEs in food and restaurant activities. Additionally, it encourages home delivery services to overcome weak sales consequences. The fund's commitment to supporting SMEs and entrepreneurs is significant for Oman's development. Also, the Sanad Program, established by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, aims to employ citizens and promote entrepreneurship, particularly youth entrepreneurship (Islamic Markets, 2020). It offers up to RO 10,000 for sole proprietorships and RO 50,000 for partnership LLC companies. The program also introduces the "Entrepreneur Award," which inspires competitiveness and entrepreneurial spirit while promoting economic projects.

Other programs include Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM), which was established in 2003 and aims to promote the spread of information technology and communication through the promotion of investment in this sector. Times News Service (2017) stated that new businesses are trained and nurtured in KOM's two first-class incubators, while enterprises of all types excel in the exceptional facilities offered for start-ups (Madayn, 2018). Similarly, Oman Development Bank (ODB) is the leading performer in financing businesses that create Oman jobs. The bank provides several amenities for micro, SMEs, and large ventures. ODB grants loans to different development sectors such as fisheries, tourism, agriculture, health, industry, education, and IT. ODB's core intention is to help entrepreneurs and diverse areas of society (Oman Observer, 2023). The ministry of Social Development/Livelihood Resources Project aims to find income sources for entrepreneurs to raise Oman's living standards.

Furthermore, the private sector in Oman has also created various programmes to help entrepreneurs, like the Youth Projects Development Scheme, the Intilaaqa Program by Shell Petroleum Company, and Grofin Oman, a programme to educate aspiring entrepreneurs about best practices (Shell Intilaaqah, 2023). Other programmes include Ajyal Al Mustaqbal, BP Oman, IDO Investments, Iskan Oman Investment Company, GroFin, Oman Technology Fund, Oman Venture Capital, and Zubair SEC. Besides, the commercial banks of Oman, HSBC Bank Middle East Limited, Bank Muscat, Sohar Bank, Bank Dhofar, and the National Bank of

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Oman also support small and medium enterprises. All these programmes promote an enterprise society (Smith, 2022). Recently, the Sultanate of Oman launched a new foreign investment law and a company law, along with a new bankruptcy protection law (Omanuna, 2020). However, due to the absence of venture capital companies (VCC) in Oman, several potential entrepreneurs remain hopeful of acquiring a public sector job rather than venturing out on their own business. Consequently, the following hypotheses are put forth for the research:

Research Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant association between family income and their opinions on students' awareness of the government's role in promoting entrepreneurship.

H2: There is no significant association between father's occupation and their opinions on the students' awareness of the government's role in promoting entrepreneurship.

H3: There is no significant association between education and their opinions on students' awareness of the government's role in promoting entrepreneurship.

H4: There is no significant association between the program of the study and their opinions on students' awareness of the government's role in promoting entrepreneurship.

3. Methodology

This study used the deductive research approach, which involves starting with a theory, developing hypotheses from it, testing those hypotheses, and then updating the theory (Babbie, 2010). This approach is known for going from the general to the specific. Additionally, a quantitative research methodology was used since, according to Kothari (2019), this method uses statistical or mathematical techniques to quantify the data and identify cause-and-effect linkages between variables. In this study, the descriptive research approach was used since it illustrates the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. This methodology focuses more on the "what" of the study issue than the "why" (Creswell, 2014). Purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique, was employed for this investigation. Using the technique of purposeful sampling, a sample is selected depending on the researcher's background and area of expertise. According to Bernard (2002), it is also known as "judgmental" or "authoritative" sampling. There were 478 people in the study's sample. The data was gathered using both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was acquired using a survey, or questionnaires. In this study, a questionnaire created by Venesaar et al. (2006) was employed. Nevertheless, the questionnaire was changed to better suit the study's requirements.

Any research project, according to Babbie (2010), must include defining issues or problems, developing hypotheses or solutions, gathering, arranging, and evaluating data, drawing conclusions, and forming inferences. Moreover, Creswell (2014) stressed that a thorough evaluation of the study's findings is necessary to verify that they align with the initial hypothesis. Moreover, Kothari (2019) claimed that the investigator might review any preconceived notions following data analysis. The standard question that needs to be addressed when testing hypotheses is: do the statistics support or contradict the theories? The data were analysed using the weighted mean, rank, percentage, and frequency distribution. A statistical method called the frequency distribution is used to ascertain both the distribution of respondents and the frequency of respondents who meet a particular profile, such as age, gender, or marital status. The percentage was used to compute the proportion of respondents

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as well as the percentage of respondents who met a specific profile (Creswell, 2014). To draw conclusions, other pertinent statistical methods were also utilised. The Cronbach's alpha for this investigation showed that a value of 0.905 is reliable and appropriate for further analysis. A value of 0.700 is required for the instrument's reliability.

4. Results

Table 1 shows the respondents demographic profile, Females make up 62.6 percent of the population, while men make up 37.4 percent. The results do not correspond to Oman's national population (NCSI, 2020), which has a female population of 38.7 percent and a male population of 61.3 percent. To conclude, the majority of survey respondents are female. Besides, sixty-nine percent of those surveyed are between the ages of 22 and 25. According to NCSI (2020), 60% of Omani citizens are between the ages of 21 and 26. As a result, the results and estimates are consistent. Furthermore, 14.4 percent of respondents are between the ages of 26 and 30, 12.1 percent between the ages of 31 and 35, and 4% between the ages of 36 and older. 40.8 percent of respondents reside in the city, i.e., Muscat, while 34.7 percent live in villages, and the remaining 24.5 percent stay in various towns throughout Oman. In terms of education, 71.3 percent of respondents graduated, while 28.7 percent received a higher diploma. As part of their studies, 24.7% of participants took tourism and hospitality management courses. Business management is the next-highest category, with a 20.3 percent share, followed by accounting and finance (19.7 percent) and human resources management (18.4 percent). Other courses studied by 8.6 percent were nursing, agriculture, and engineering, while 8.4 percent studied event management.

The respondent's father worked for the government in 39.3 percent of cases, while 15.1% owned enterprises and 14.2% retired. Further, 9.6% worked in agriculture, 11.7% in the private sector, and 10% were jobless. Similarly, 68.6% of the mothers of the respondents were housewives, compared to 10.7% who worked for the government, 6.9% in the private sector, and 5% who were retired. Moreover, 4.6% of people worked in agriculture, and the remaining 4.2% ran their own businesses. According to the findings, up to RO 1000 represents 50.4 percent of the respondent's family's income. 15.9% of respondents indicated their family income surpassed RO 3001, while 18% were unclear. Furthermore, 8.2% claimed that their monthly income is between RO 2001 and 3000, while the remaining 7.5% stated that their monthly income is between RO 1001 and 2000. Inferring from this, half of the respondent families earn less than RO 1000 each month.

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Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

A1. Gender	Frequency	Per cent
Male	179	37.4
Female	299	62.6
A2. Age (Optional)	Frequency	Percent
20-25	332	69.5
26-30	69	14.4
31-35	58	12.1
36 and above	19	4.0
A3. Permanent residing area	Frequency	Percent
City, i.e., Muscat	195	40.8
Town	117	24.5
Village	166	34.7
A4. Education	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	137	28.7
Graduation	341	71.3
A5. Programme of the study	Frequency	Percent
Tourism and Hospitality	118	24.7
HR Management	88	18.4
Accounting and Finance	94	19.7
Event Management	40	8.4
Business Management	97	20.3
Other	41	8.6
A6. Parent's Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Own Business	72	15.1
Salaried Employee Private	56	11.7
Salaried Employee Government	226	39.3
Retired	73	14.2
Agriculture	41	9.6
Unemployed	48	10
A7. Family Income (Optional)	Frequency	Percent
Up to OMR 1000	241	50.4
OMR 1001 to 2000	36	7.5
OMR 2001 to 3000	39	8.2
OMR 3001 and above	76	15.9
Do not know	86	18.0
Prefer not to answer	0	0

Table 2 shows the inference: Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability across multiple dimensions. The above table displays the results obtained. The alpha for students' awareness of the role played by the government and the systems it has in place to assist entrepreneurship in Oman is 0.905. The rating is high, and a value of > 0.7 implies that the presented items have very strong internal consistency.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Students' awareness of the government's role and its support structures to promote entrepreneurship in Oman	.905	18

Students' awareness of the government's role and its support structures to promote entrepreneurship in Oman (Table 3) has the highest mean score reported for: Youth entrepreneurial activity is hampered by a lack of support and encouragement by authorities

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(\bar{X} 4.33); I lack the necessary technical and practical skills to start my own business (\bar{X} 4.32); the fear of failure would be a significant barrier to starting a business (\bar{X} 4.30); qualified advisors and support are made available to start a new business through faster licenses, office space, and permits (\bar{X} 4.29); and I must struggle to raise the necessary capital to start a new business (\bar{X} 4.24). The lack of support and encouragement by authorities, according to the respondents, hinders young people's entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, they lack the technical and practical knowledge needed to launch their own firm. Many individuals believe that starting a business would be very difficult since they are scared of failing. However, respondents claimed that quicker licences, office space, and permissions made skilled experts and assistance available to establish a new organisation. On the other hand, they assert that it is challenging to obtain cash to launch a business.

The most leading mean scores for students' awareness of the government's role and its support structures to promote entrepreneurship in Oman are: I lack the confidence to start my own business (\bar{X} 4.24); the risks involved in setting up a business are too high; government employment has security (\bar{X} 4.19); there is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman (\bar{X} 4.15); lack of knowledge of the commercial and legal aspects of a business (\bar{X} 4.12); the entrepreneurship course at my college inspires me to develop ideas for a new business (\bar{X} 4.10). According to the results, respondents believe they are hesitant to start their own business because they lack confidence and because starting a business carries far too many dangers, whereas working for the government is safe. Additionally, a well-functioning infrastructure is required to launch a new firm in Oman. Furthermore, they believe that a company's commercial and legal parts are poorly understood. They did, however, say that the college's entrepreneurship classes inspire them to think about fresh company ideas.

Similarly, the respondents agree with the following statements: through the SME Development Fund, Al Rafd Fund, Injaz Oman, Riyada, and Sanad, government funding is made available for me to start a new business (\bar{X} 3.99); the fear of numbers and financial statements prevents me from starting a business (\bar{X} 3.99); I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur (\bar{X} 3.97); banks and other financial institutions do not provide loans to startup businesses (\bar{X} 3.96); lack of market expertise may fail my business (\bar{X} 3.90). According to the statements, money is available for me to launch a new firm through the SME Development Fund, Al Rafd Fund, Injaz Oman, Riyada, and Sanad. They can't start a business because they're anxious about numbers and financial statements. Likewise, they consider that start-ups do not have the opportunity to borrow money from banks or other financial institutions. Furthermore, they anticipated their new business would fail due to a lack of industry understanding. They acknowledge, on the other hand, that they have strong social networks that they can tap into if they decide to establish their own company.

Finally, the lowest mean scores recorded for lack of students' awareness of the government's role and its support structures to promote entrepreneurship in Oman are entrepreneurship training cripples starting a new business (\bar{X} 3.89); I have access to supporting information to start to be an entrepreneur (\bar{X} 3.68). Respondents stated that beginning a new business is challenging because of a lack of entrepreneurship training, but that they have access to tools that will assist them in starting their own business.

Table 3. Government's role and its support structures to promote entrepreneurship in Oman

Students' awareness	\bar{X}	Verbal Interpretation	SD	Rank
Lack of support and encouragement by authorities is affecting youth entrepreneurial activity.	4.33	Strongly Agree	0.912	1
I do not have the appropriate technical and practical skills to start my own business.	4.32	Strongly Agree	0.936	2
The anxiety of failure would pose a significant challenge to starting a business.	4.30	Strongly Agree	0.912	3
Qualified advisors and support through faster licences, office space, and permits are made available to start a new business.	4.29	Strongly Agree	0.853	4
I have to struggle to raise the necessary capital to start a business.	4.24	Strongly Agree	0.982	5
I lack the confidence to start my own business.	4.22	Strongly Agree	0.988	6
The risks involved in setting up a business are too high. Government employment has security.	4.19	Strongly Agree	0.935	7
There is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman.	4.15	Strongly Agree	0.915	8
Lack of knowledge of the commercial and legal aspects of a business.	4.12	Strongly Agree	0.919	9
The entrepreneurship course at my college inspires me to develop ideas for a new business.	4.10	Strongly Agree	1.027	10
If I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a business.	4.09	Strongly Agree	1.078	11
Through the SME Development Fund, Al Rafd Fund, Injaz Oman, Riyada, and Sanad, government funding is made available for me to start a new business.	3.99	Agree	1.118	12
The fear of numbers and financial statements prevents me from starting a business.	3.98	Agree	1.109	13
I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur.	3.97	Agree	1.260	14
Banks and other financial institutions do not provide loans to startup businesses.	3.96	Agree	1.136	15
Lack of market expertise may fail my business.	3.90	Agree	1.091	16
Lack of entrepreneurship training cripples starting a new business.	3.89	Agree	1.165	17
I have access to supporting information to start being an entrepreneur.	3.68	Agree	1.305	18
Total	4.09	Strongly Agree	1.035	18

Table 4 shows the chi-square is not significant (sig. value is $0.890 > 0.05$), so there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It means that there is no significant association between family income and their opinions on students' awareness of the government's role. It means that a student's awareness of the government's role is independent of their family income.

Table 4. Family's income per month * Students Awareness of the Government's Role

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.533	16	.890

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Table 5 shows the chi-square is not significant (sig. value is $0.095 > 0.05$), so there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It means that there is no significant association between the father's occupation and their opinions on the student's awareness of the government's role. It means that a student's awareness of the government's role is independent of their father's occupation.

Table 5. Father's Occupation * Students Awareness of the Government's Role

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.627	20	.095

Table 6 shows the chi-square is not significant (sig. value is $0.779 > 0.05$), so there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It means that there is no significant association between education and their opinions on students' awareness of the government's role. It means that a student's awareness of the government's role is independent of their education.

Table 6. Education * Students Awareness of the Government's Role

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.766	4	.779

Table 7 shows the chi-square is not significant (sig. value is $0.498 > 0.05$), so there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It means that there is no significant association between the program of study and their opinions on students' awareness of the government's role. It means that a student's awareness of the government's role is independent of the program of the study.

Table 7. Program of the study * Students Awareness of the Government's Role

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.362	20	.498

Table 8 shows the factor analysis, which is a data reduction technique. It also helps in structure detection among the variables and further helps in studying the underlying crucial factors that cause the maximum variation. Before we proceeded to factor analysis, the researcher first tested the eligibility of the data by checking KMO-Bartlett's test, which is a measure of sampling adequacy. The KMO value is $0.920 > 0.5$ (indicates meritorious). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicates a measure of the multivariate normality of a set of variables (a Sig. value of less than 0.05 indicates multivariate normality and is acceptable for factor analysis).

Table 8. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.920
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5304.982
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

Table 9, 10 and 11 shows the principal component matrix gives the component matrix, which is rotated using the varimax rotation technique, which gives the rotated component matrix. The rotation of factors helps in the better interpretation of factors. Because the first factor in the rotated component matrix is heavily loaded with a lack of government support

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and encouragement, affecting youth entrepreneurial activity, Lack of entrepreneurship training cripples starting a new business; lack of knowledge about the commercial and legal aspects of a business, The risks involved in setting up a business are too high. Government employment has security. Lack of market expertise may fail my business. However, there is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman, and the anxiety of failure would pose a significant challenge to starting a business. The factor loading values are 0.791, 0.789, 0.778, 0.763, 0.759, 0.758, 0.751, and 0.716, respectively. The first factor represents the lack of government support and encouragement affecting youth entrepreneurial activity. Lack of entrepreneurship training cripples starting a new business, Lack of knowledge about the commercial and legal aspects of a business. The risks involved in setting up a business are too high. Government employment has security. Lack of market expertise may fail my business. However, there is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman, and the anxiety of failure would pose a significant challenge to starting a business.

The second factor is heavily loaded with: I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur (0.810), I lack the confidence to start my own business (0.810), and the entrepreneurship course at my college inspires me to develop ideas for a new business (0.809). The final list of three factors, which collectively account for 65.52% of the variance in the data, is shown below.

Table 9. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.215	45.638	45.638	8.215	45.638	45.638	5.972	33.176	33.176
2	2.022	11.234	56.871	2.022	11.234	56.871	4.260	23.667	56.843
3	1.557	8.649	65.520	1.557	8.649	65.520	1.562	8.677	65.520
4	.789	4.384	69.904						
5	.676	3.758	73.662						
6	.567	3.151	76.813						
7	.516	2.867	79.680						
8	.487	2.705	82.385						
9	.465	2.583	84.968						
10	.425	2.359	87.327						
11	.410	2.278	89.605						
12	.370	2.054	91.659						
13	.323	1.797	93.456						
14	.295	1.637	95.094						
15	.271	1.503	96.597						
16	.238	1.323	97.921						
17	.203	1.129	99.049						
18	.171	.951	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

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Table 10. Rotated Component Matrix^a

Factor Name	Component		
	1	2	3
If I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a business.	.672	.136	-.050
I have to struggle to raise the necessary capital to start a business.	.671	.218	.016
The risks involved in setting up a business are too high. Government employment has security.	.763	.222	-.019
Lack of market expertise may fail my business.	.759	.274	-.080
Lack of knowledge of the commercial and legal aspects of a business.	.778	.228	.047
The anxiety of failure would pose a significant challenge to starting a business.	.716	.274	.044
Lack of support and encouragement by authorities is affecting youth entrepreneurial activity.	.791	.232	.013
The fear of numbers and financial statements prevents me from starting a business.	.751	.278	.081
Lack of entrepreneurship training cripples starting a new business.	.789	.213	-.018
There is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman.	.758	.271	-.049
I have access to supporting information to start being an entrepreneur.	.247	.693	-.027
Banks and other financial institutions do not provide loans to start-up businesses.	.251	.797	.006
Through the SME Development Fund, Al Rafd Fund, Injaz Oman, Riyada, and Sanad, government funding is made available for me to start a new business.	.270	.781	.014
I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur.	.304	.810	-.018
The entrepreneurship course at my college inspires me to develop ideas for a new business.	.243	.809	-.065
I lack the confidence to start my own business.	.245	.810	.024
I do not have the appropriate technical and practical skills to start my own business.	.023	-.012	.875
Qualified advisors and support through faster licenses, office space, and permits are made available to start a new business.	-.029	-.023	.876
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.			

Table 11. Three Factors

No	Factor Name	Factor loading Value	Common Name
1	Lack of support and encouragement by authorities is affecting youth entrepreneurial activity.	0.791	
	Lack of entrepreneurship training cripples the start of a new business.	0.789	
	Lack of knowledge of the commercial and legal aspects of a business.	0.778	
	The risks involved in setting up a business are too high. Government employment has security.	0.763	
	Lack of market expertise may fail my business.	0.759	
	There is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman.	0.758	
	The fear of numbers and financial statements prevents me from starting a business.	0.751	
	The anxiety of failure would pose a significant challenge to starting a business.	0.716	
2	I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur.	0.810	

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	I lack the confidence to start my own business.	0.810	
	The entrepreneurship course at my college inspires me to develop ideas for a new business.	0.809	
3	Qualified advisors and support through faster licenses, office space, and permits are made available to start a new business.	0.876	
	I do not have the appropriate technical and practical skills to start my own business.	0.875	
	The fear of numbers and financial statements prevents me from starting a business.	0.081	

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

Oman has started taking several actions to encourage young people to explore entrepreneurship, such as Riyada's Entrepreneurs Card, Oman's SME Development Fund, Sharakah, the Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (Ithraa), the National Business Centre (NBC), Al Raffd, and the Sanad Programme (Islamic Markets, 2020; Times News Service, 2016). Additionally, the Sultanate of Oman's private sector has made a few programmes available to encourage small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurship, such as the Youth Projects Development Scheme and the Intilaqa Programme (Shell Intilaaqah, 2023). This initiative offers a business fund to empower Oman's SMEs with cash and ongoing support. Additionally, commercial banks have started lending money to potential business owners (Oman Observer, 2023; Trade Arabia, 2020). However, the results do not align with the different government support mechanisms offered by the government, based on Table 3 and Table 11, like lack of support and encouragement by authorities is affecting youth entrepreneurial activity (4.33); I do not have the appropriate technical and practical skills to start my own business (4.32); the anxiety of failure would pose a significant challenge to starting a business (4.30); qualified advisors and support through faster licences, office space, and permits are made available to start a new business (4.29). This indicates that the vast majority of participants were not cognizant of official assistance initiatives. While the government launched many programmes to support entrepreneurs, they were not effectively exploited because of a lack of awareness. Investigating this gap is necessary; otherwise, all the efforts will go to waste.

The results in Table 3 and Table 11 show that respondents struggle to raise the necessary capital to start a business (4.24); I lack the confidence to start my own business (4.22); and the risks involved in setting up a business are too high. Government employment has security (4.19); lack of knowledge of the commercial and legal aspects of a business (4.12); if I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a business (4.09). The results do not reflect reality, as the government initiated several programs like Al Raffd, SMEF, Riyada, Ithraa, and many more to support entrepreneurs. The goal of these programs is to provide high-quality funding for various business needs and to offer the necessary direction and market expertise to assist Oman's youth in turning their ideas into businesses. They make certain that every new idea will have the support, direction, and encouragement it requires to be a prosperous entrepreneurial endeavour (Habeb, 2023; Oman Observer, 2023; Riyada, 2020).

Banks and other financial institutions do not provide loans to start-up businesses (3.96). However, the government and its support structures are making it accessible for

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entrepreneurs to start a new business through the SME Development Fund, Al Rafd Fund, Injaz Oman, Riyada, and Sanad (Smith, 2022). As a result of the discrepancy between the results and the government initiatives, there is a greater need to inform potential entrepreneurs about the various government support programmes so they can take advantage of them. Table 3, however, did report a few favourable results: there is a well-functioning infrastructure in place to start a new business in Oman (4.15); the entrepreneurship course at my college inspires me to develop ideas for a new business (4.10); I have good social networks that can be utilised when I decide to be an entrepreneur (3.97); and I have access to supporting information to start being an entrepreneur (3.68). Based on the results, most respondents are satisfied with the entrepreneurship course they took in college, and they believe they have strong social networks that they can use if they ever decide to start their own business and can finally access the necessary resources. The findings are consistent with O'Connor (2013), Shane and Venkataraman (2000), and Ajzen (2002), who said that access to resources and supporting information is critical for entrepreneurial success.

5.2. Conclusion

To launch new businesses in the hopes that they will contribute to economic growth and create jobs, Oman is encouraging entrepreneurship. This tendency is based on the realisation that huge enterprises already in operation cannot meet the rising need for employment and that entrepreneurship will address issues with unemployment and economic growth. Oman initiated various entrepreneurial support programmes as they recognised the value of starting new businesses as a way to create job possibilities for Omanis, which in turn helped the nation's economy grow on a larger scale and enabled people to become strong, capable entrepreneurs.

The entrepreneur serves as a role model in the community, creates jobs for others, acts as a stabilising force, and is a major source of funding for the growth of a country's underlying economic system. Besides, the entrepreneur imparts new vitality and fulfils a crucial function in society's development. Therefore, governmental and non-governmental organisations must work together to help entrepreneurial people financially and educationally in order to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in Oman. The measured results, despite training and other efforts, have not been adequate. Many people are hesitant to start new enterprises or to grow the ones that already exist. There is an overall reluctance to take risks, which is a prerequisite for economic expansion. Understanding the behavioural traits of Omani entrepreneurs is crucial for reviving the economy through the creation of new businesses and the expansion of current ones.

The findings show that respondents were less aware of the significant contributions that various institutions have made to fostering entrepreneurship in Oman. Many respondents held the opinion that the needed financial capital was unavailable and that there was minimal government support for business development. Other important players' resultant roles, such as academic institutions, private banks, and public-private partnership programs, are not sufficiently acknowledged and embraced. This study demonstrates that many respondents (students) have very ambiguous ideas with regard to starting their own business. They are not yet prepared to launch business and do not know what they lack or what their needs are. Therefore, there is a definite need for increased promotional campaigns for entrepreneurial

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education, mentoring, and training programmes, as well as increased exposure for financial institutions that support entrepreneurs in Oman.

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