



WHAT ABOUT YOUTH?

An Academic City, KPMG and
The Talent Enterprise research effort

—
November 2020

KPMG, DIAC and The Talent Enterprise (TTE) collaborated for a unique research effort: WHAT ABOUT YOUTH!



This research is further augmented by KPMG & TTE's previous research work with industry and university stakeholders:



**KPMG's
Future of HR**



**TTE's
Work Readiness
Research**

Students from 16 institutions participated in the research

ACCA

Amity University

Birla Institute of Technology, Pilani, Dubai Campus

Curtin University

Gulf Medical University, Ajman

Heriot-Watt University

Institute of Management Technology

Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Dubai Campus

Middlesex University Dubai

Murdoch University

National Institute of Vocational Education

Regents University of London

SAE Dubai

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST)

University Of Wollongong in Dubai

University Of Birmingham Dubai

The research aims to provide valuable insights for universities and employers



Understanding the future workforce

This research is dedicated to developing insights and understanding the future workforce, particularly what matters to the youth of today.



Key drivers for youth today

This research aims to explore a range of dimensions that may influence and affect university students in order to understand what drives students today.



Insights for universities

This research seeks to provide a broad-ranging view of factors which contribute to students' successful completion of studies and integration into the workforce. This can help universities:

- Consistently and effectively **attract new students**
- Enhance the support they provide, according to the **contemporary needs and values of young people**
- Shape students' **experience and maximize the impact of their time** at university on their future career



Insights for employers

This research intends to provide insights to employers about the upcoming generation of new graduates who will join their workforce. This can help them:

- Provide relevant opportunities to ensure **new talent is attracted** to the organization
- Enhance **attraction/retention** by promoting aspects of organizational culture which align with graduate values
- Create **effective learning and development initiatives** by anticipating graduates' needs

Students from various universities and nationalities participated in this research

The research has been conducted over a few 'phases' – the first phase conducted over 2017-2019 had a total of **10,004** youth who participated in the survey, representing a student population of over **128,000** from across the GCC, including the UAE.

The second phase, launched from Q4 2019 to Q1 2020, included 874 students from the UAE representing **25,000+** students from Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) universities.

The combined sample comprises **10** nationalities from **49** universities.

Participant breakdown by nationality



40%
were GCC expats and



60%
were GCC nationals



Participant breakdown based on gender and age group



43%
were female



57%
were male.



74%
were above 18 years of age



while
26%
were 18 years and below.

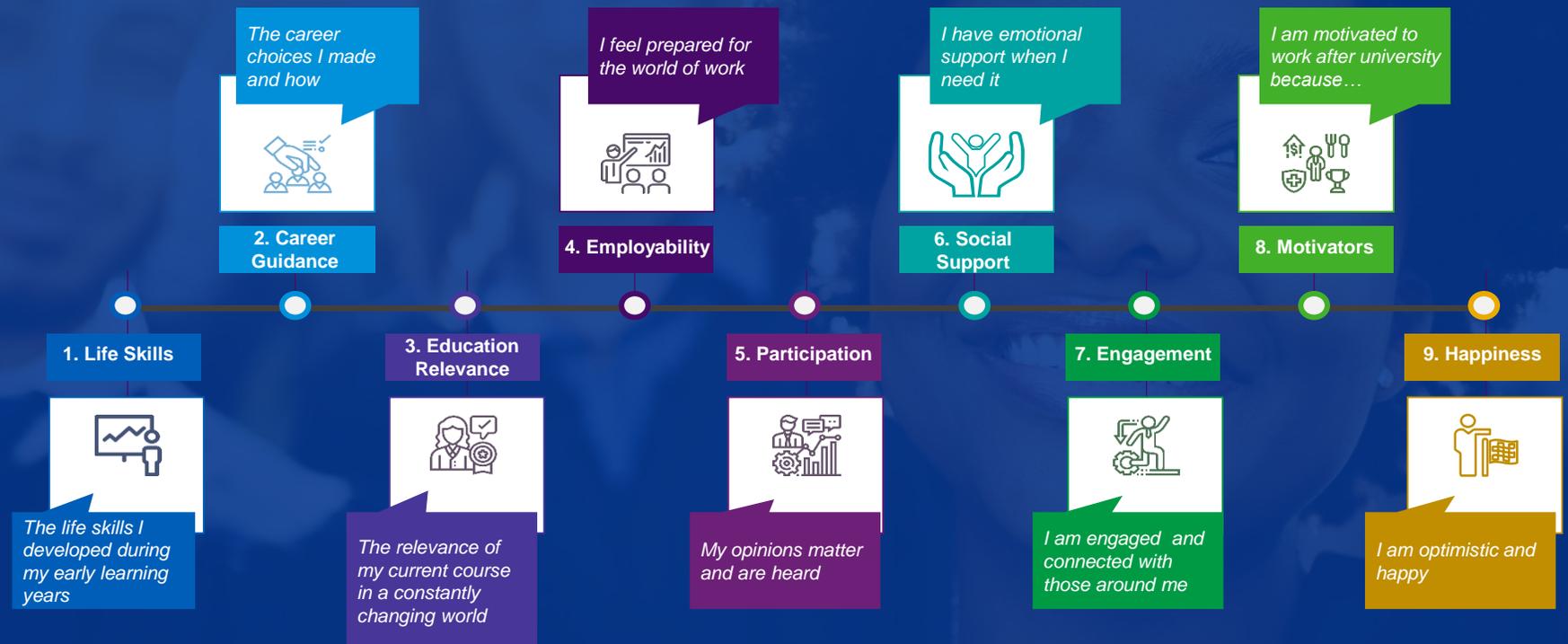
Overall research design

Phase 2 data was collected online, via an anonymous survey (with no individual identifiers) through convenience sampling at the participating DIAC universities.

The online links were shared via email with the students by the universities as well as kiosks at various locations to encourage more students to participate.

The data was collected from November 2019 to February 2020 for this phase of the research. A majority of the students were between the age group of 18 – 25 years.

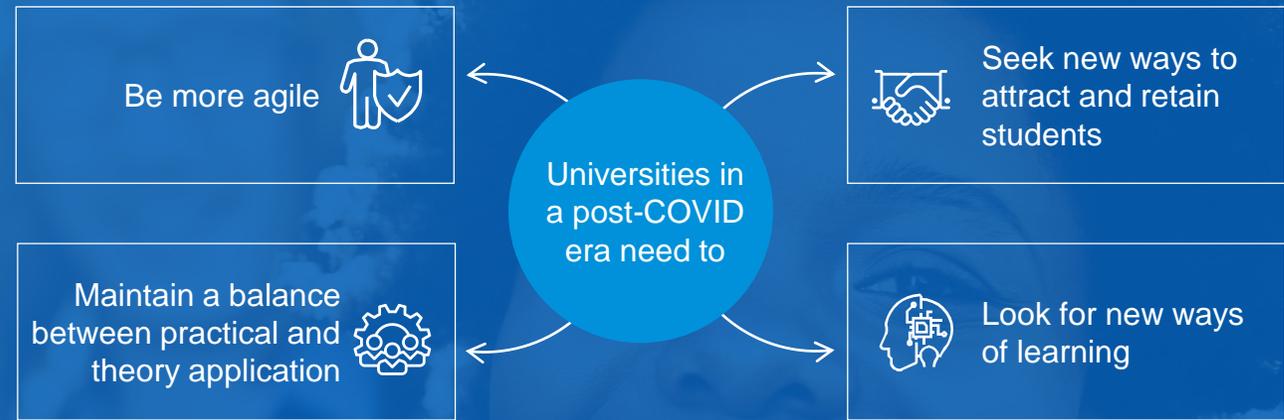
For Phase 2, a total of **55** quantitative questions were asked in the survey, across 9 dimensions.



Universities will continue to be challenged in a post-COVID-19 world

The COVID-19 scenario has caused many students and parents alike to fundamentally question the value of traditional education all over the world. One of the challenges faced by most higher education institutes will be **enrollment and a continued uptake in new admissions**. In the US, approximately one in five current students are uncertain about their plans for re-enrolling in the fall or are not going at all.¹

In a research study conducted among UAE students by **KPMG, DIAC and The Talent Enterprise** earlier in the year, **before the crisis had fully emerged, only 49% of students said that they would study in the same university again.**



Key consideration for universities: Relevance of education to employability

- **62%** of the youth rate their universities more favorably for the **teaching pedagogy, saying that their courses had the right balance of theory and practical application**
- **7 in 10 students** believe that education is providing them with the **skills they need to work**

Key recommendations

- In a post COVID world, where the lines of formal and alternative education, classroom and digital learning is getting diffused, universities will need to **find new ways to attract and retain students in terms of sustaining enrolment and uptake.**
- Global trends point to a **significant shift in the entire experience and delivery of education**, and universities will need to be more agile than ever before. Introducing students to **innovative ways of communicating and learning** for students, like app-based learning, gamification, etc. is also integral to engaging them.

¹Source: American Council of Education, 2020

Students demand more professional career guidance from their universities

Only 48% would study the same course again, if given a choice. This is quite a startling revelation considering most students spend **five to six** of their most formative adult years in undergraduate and graduate education. Average tuition fees range from **AED 37,500 to AED 70,000** per year and **AED 55,000 to AED 75,000** per year for undergraduate and graduate programs respectively in private universities.¹



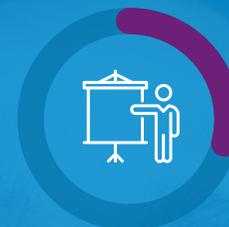
Only 3%

Receive formal career guidance from career counsellors



Over 60%

Rely on the opinions of family or friends for career guidance



17%

Rely on the faculty or professors for career guidance



40%

Have never taken career assessment to explore career options



Only 3%

Receive any kind of advice from alumni



72%

Would like to receive career advice from career counsellors, professors or faculty, alumni and mentors

Key consideration for universities: Relevance of education to employability

- Students are clearly signaling to their universities to **elevate the level of professional career guidance support.**

Key recommendations

- Universities need to invest in providing students access to the **latest career guidance tools**, updated information on **jobs and careers linked to future of work.**
- It is recommended for universities to generate more avenues and forums to enhance **parents' awareness in career counselling discussions.**
- There are huge opportunities for universities to **strengthen alumni-student relations**, as alumni are arguably closest to the latest developments in the labor market and can help with networking and career advice.

¹Source: Educations.com, 2019

Youth are hopeful however there is a gap between employers' and educators' expectations (1/3)

72% of youth are confident that their skills and personal attributes will help them compete for a job anywhere in the world, yet only **56%** have a clear plan of what they are going to do when they leave university.

Phase 1 research¹ conducted by **The Talent Enterprise** on future skills and mindset for youth in the region also suggests the **top strengths for UAE national youth and expatriate youth**

Critical 21st Century Employability Strengths of Youth in the UAE

High on Achievement, Ambition, Grit and Growth Mindset
Lower on Accountability, Autonomy, Resilience and Ambiguity.



% youth with norm scores of 4 (between 69th and 93rd percentile) and 5 (higher than 93rd percentile) on The Thriving Index, a strengths based psychometric assessment.

Key consideration for universities and employers:

- UAE national youth have higher levels of **optimism and positivity**, and a greater **sense of ambition and achievement** than expatriate youth. Expatriate youth on the other hand report **a greater level of agility and competitiveness**.
- Keeping in mind **future skills**, both UAE national youth and expatriate youth **are significantly lower** on critical strengths

such as **resilience, ambiguity, analytical, empathy and accountability**. These results are especially relevant within the context of the **current COVID-19 pandemic**.

- An overwhelming **63% of students place the most responsibility on employers for preparing them to enter the workforce**, and only **10%** believe that it is their educators responsibility to do so. **19%** of students believe its their own responsibility.

¹Source: The Talent Enterprise Youth Strengths in the GCC as assessed though the Thriving Index 2019 with n – 10,004.

Youth are hopeful however there is a gap between employers' and educators' expectations (2/3)

The primary barriers for hiring fresh graduates in many industries are their **'lack of experience'** and **'lack of necessary skills'** (57% and 32%, respectively).



While employers believe that youth need to work on their **digital, data analysis, research and technology skills**, students like to focus on learning aspects of **creative thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork**



63% of CEOs say that **"acting with agility"** is the new currency of business



80% of organizations in the UAE are actively transforming their leadership team to build resilience while only **58%** of the youth, when employed, display resilience at workplace.¹

Key recommendations

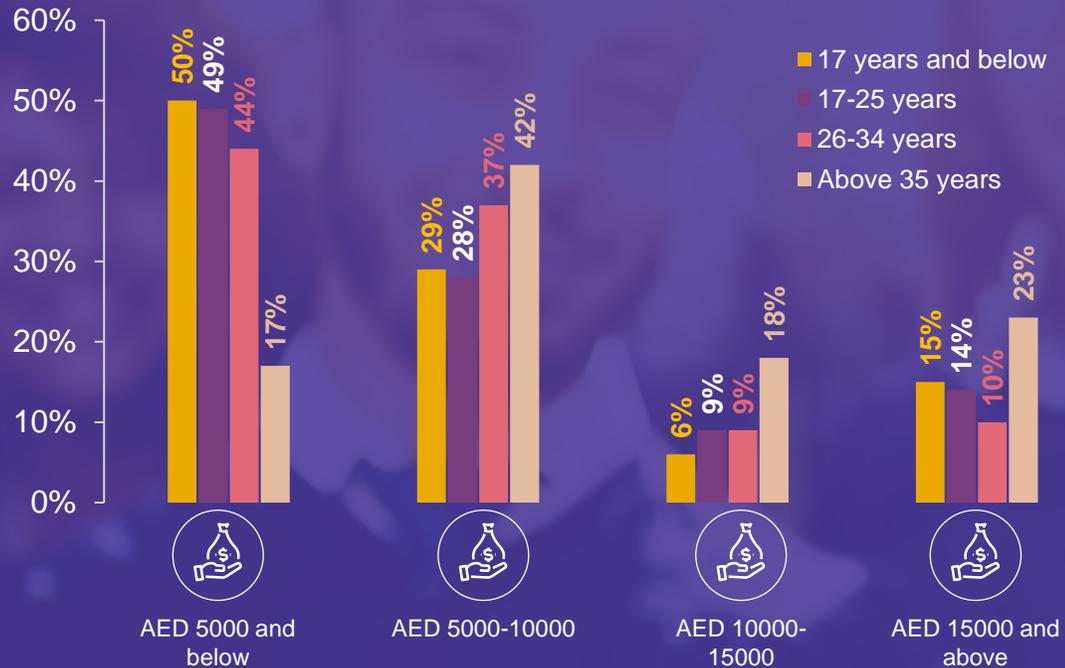
- It is recommended for universities to add more courses that teach **digital education and instill data analytics skills in students**
- Universities need to focus on **building resilience** amongst students. Some examples that have been implemented at universities are **student-dedicated well-being apps, resilience workshops, storytelling projects and seminars held by alumni** talking about success and failures, etc.

¹Source: Work Readiness Research by The Talent Enterprise 2018/2019

²Source: Youth Survey by Bayt.com and YouGov

Youth are hopeful however there is a gap between employers' and educators' expectations (3/3)

Starting salary expectations- Expats



Starting salary expectations- Nationals



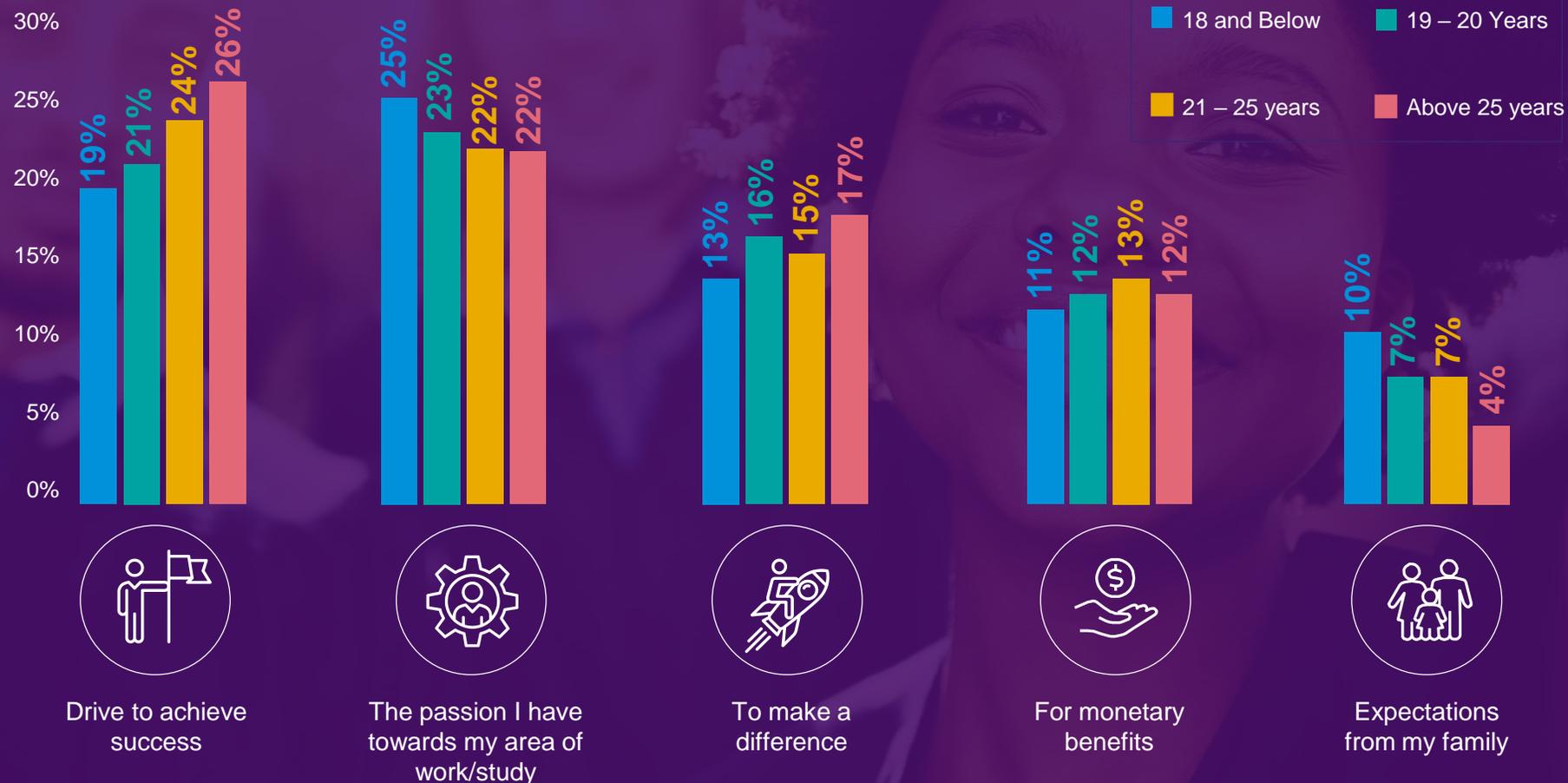
Key consideration for employers:

- Approximately **58%** of expatriate students are expecting a starting salary of **AED 2,500 to AED 7,500 per month**.
- UAE national students (approximately **50%**) expect a starting salary of **AED 15,000 to AED 30,000 per month** in comparison to approximately **only 20%** of the expatriate students expecting the same amount as their starting salary.
- **40%** of the expatriate students, in the age group of 17 – 25 years, expect a starting salary of **AED 2,500 to 5,000 per month**. The corresponding number for national students is only **6%**, as over **80%** of them expect a starting salary of **AED 7,500 and above per month**.

Youth are driven by passion and are choosing business and entrepreneurship courses (1/2)

21% of students (OECD average is 27%) are keen to pursue a career in STEM-related fields, such as engineering, technology, AI and robotics, healthcare and health science, environmental and life sciences, as well as research and development. Close to **40%** are keen to pursue careers in **management, consulting, finance, HR and sales, with entrepreneurship a popular choice for 10%.**

The below graph shows how drive to achieve success and passion play an important role in motivating today's youth:



Youth are driven by passion and are choosing business and entrepreneurship courses (2/2)

Key Considerations



Passion and drive to achieve success were found to be the motivating factors for youth to work after completion of their education



Top two factors for youth in deciding their job were found to be **pay and benefits** as well as **career growth opportunities**



The most popular areas of study for youth pursuing both bachelor's and masters degrees were **business and management**



UAE national youth are more inclined to pursue a career in **consulting and business management** in comparison to expatriate youth



The top four sources of finding a job for today's youth are **internships, online job portals, personal contacts and college placement cells**



88% of the youth are willing to work as an unpaid intern for a short period of time

Key Recommendations



It is recommended for universities to have more **entrepreneurship focused courses** in their curriculum



Since the popular areas of study are in business and management, entrepreneurship courses would expose the students to **more practical based business cases**



It is recommended for universities to conduct **career fairs/events** to enhance students' exposure to various job occupations and expand their horizons on career paths



This gives the students potential to explore different avenues of careers and bring them closer to identifying their interests



It is recommended for universities to look for avenues of **professional tie-ups with academies** that provide **interest based courses**



This helps students identify their passion and give them a clear idea of the career path they want to pursue

Youth today are confident and hopeful about their future

88% of students believe that the best is yet to come.

87% of the youth believe they actively contribute to happiness and well-being of the people around them

84% of transnationals showcased hope for the future and believe that the best is yet to come

76% of the youth get the required socio-emotional support from their families, while 1 of every 10 students do not

63% of the youth belonging to the age group of 25 years and above are the most excited about the future

85% of the youth feel that their personal and career concerns are taken seriously by their families

78% of the youth are excited about their future

72% of the youth would describe themselves as feeling happy most of the time

85% of the youth report that they get positive support and recognition from their families and friends

Key recommendations

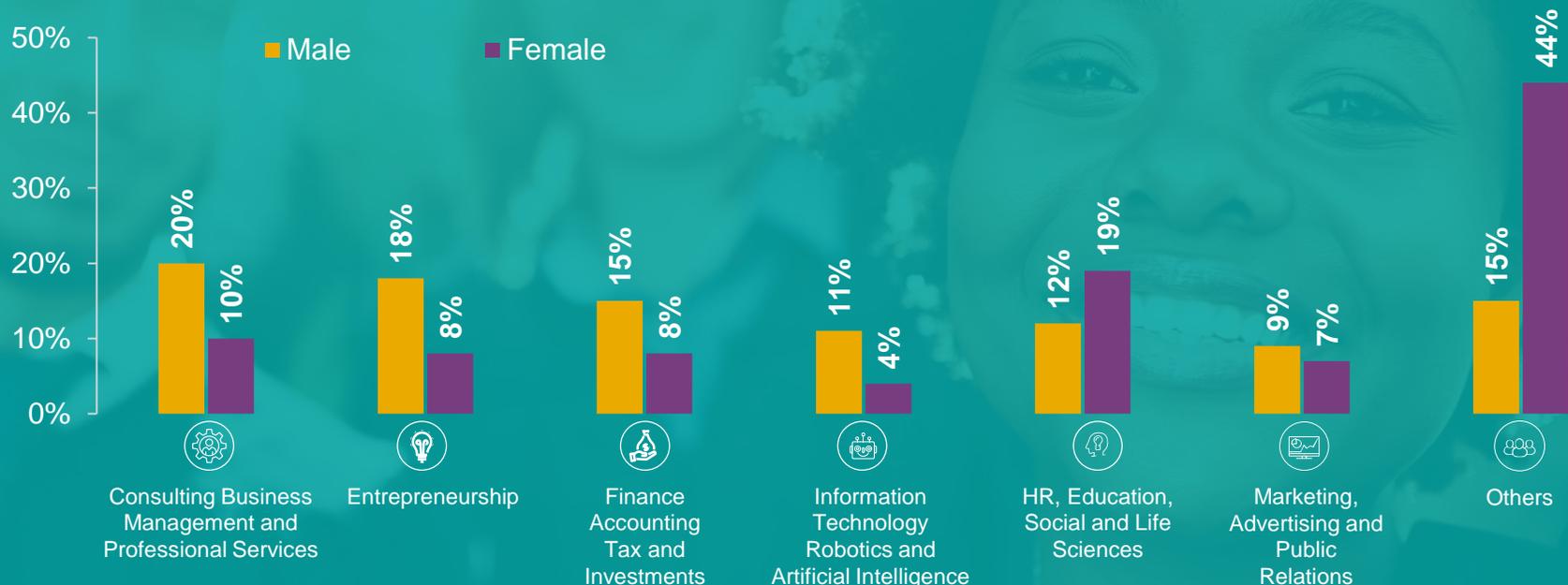
- It is recommended for employers to have a **graduate mentorship program** that provides right professional guidance, which graduates require during early stage of their career and at the same time ensures maintenance of their enthusiasm level
- It is recommended for employers and universities to **hold discussions together to identify innovative ways to tap into this enthusiasm and hope of the youth**

Females keen to pursue careers in HR, education, social and life sciences

Female youth are more passion driven towards their work and 85% of them believe that their opinions matter (as compared to 77% male youth), despite that they are less confident about their dream job and career choices.

Career choices

The below graph shows a split between male and female choices with regards to their top future career pathways indicating how females are **less willing** to take up **consulting, business management and entrepreneurship roles**. The career pathways that females are willing to pursue more than males are **human resources and training, education, healthcare, social sciences and environmental and life sciences**.



Key recommendations

— One of the key methodologies found through the data was to provide **rigorous career counselling** to female youth early on during their school and university education

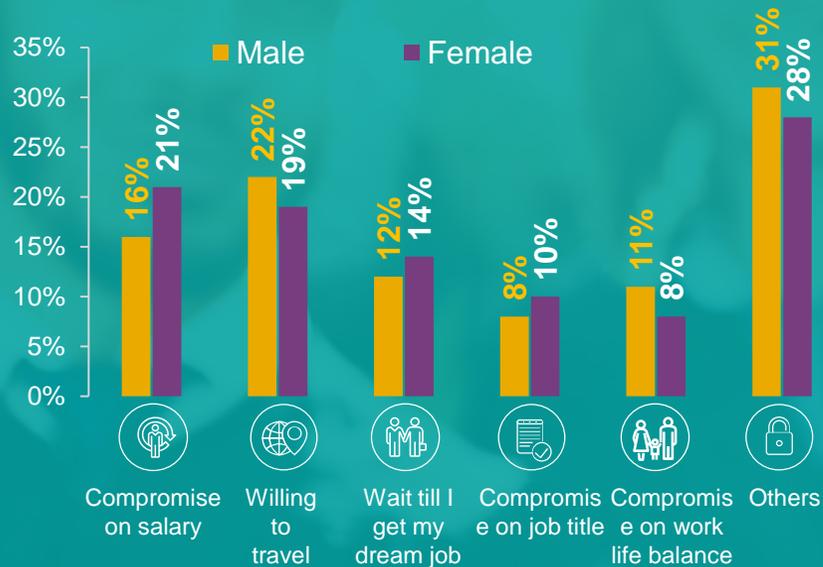
— **Incentivizing females to be involved in business cases and entrepreneurship initiatives** to increase their exposure to more careers in consulting, entrepreneurship, etc. as it would increase their confidence in taking up such career pathways where it is predominantly male

Females are less motivated by pay compared to male youth

Only 61% of the female youth are comfortable working with data, in comparison to 71% of the male youth. Also, male youth are more motivated by pay and benefits in comparison to female youth.

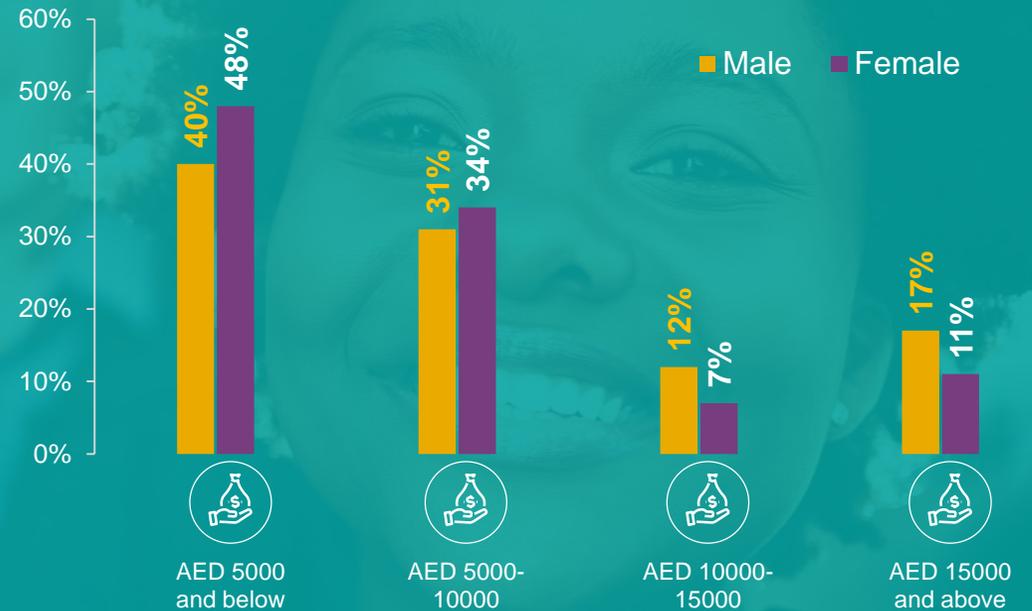
Dream job

The below graph shows how females are **more willing to wait till they get their dream job**. They also are found to be **less willing to compromise on work life balance** or take up any job till they get their dream job.



Salary

The below graph shows how more females expect **salaries of lower range** compared to men who expect higher salaries for their entry level jobs.



Key recommendations

- It is recommended for employers to **promote gender balance** within the organization by increasing the hiring opportunities for women and making diversity and inclusion a key focal point to be addressed at all times within workspaces
- It is recommended for universities and employers to establish

- female mentorship programs** to inspire and encourage budding female talent
- It is recommended for employers to adopt a **compensation philosophy built on pay based on merit, skills and talent** as opposed to pay based on gender, in order to close the pay gap between females and males

Thank you