

IMPACT OF THE UAE NATIONAL SERVICE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

تأثير الخدمة الوطنية الإلزامية علي الأداء الأكاديمي للطلبة الجامعيين
الإماراتيين

by

FATIMA ALHAMMADI

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION
at
The British University in Dubai**

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Abstract

The main focus of this study was to investigate the influence of the National Service programme in the UAE among the post-Secondary school Emirati youth on their academic development at higher learning institutions and hence career development in the future. To achieve this, three specific research objectives were developed to guide the study development. The first objective was to assess the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influences the level of discipline among the alumni while in higher learning institutions. The second objective was to explore the influence of participating in the national service programme on students' attitudes in higher learning education towards constructive feedback. The third objective was to assess the impact of participating in national service on the ability of alumni to make informed decisions on occupational choices. Snowball sampling technique was used to collect data from as many participants as possible. A sample of 1843 Emirati university students who are alumni of the national service programme, 106 parents of university national service students and 106 university lecturers, were recruited to participate in the study.

A questionnaire, including closed-ended questions to collect quantitative data and open-ended questions to collect qualitative data, was used. The collected data were analysed using statistical analysis and thematic analysis. Before conducting analysis to address the specific objectives, a descriptive approach using frequency distributions, percentages and graphical representation were used to analyse demographic data and all the quantitative data. Another pre-test for objectives analysis conducted was Cronbach's alpha test for reliability and validity of internal consistency, which showed significant reliability and validity of the data for further analysis. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Linear regression models were used to analyse the data in order to address the research objectives. The results showed that soft skills and behavioural maturity learnt during national service improve students discipline level,

attitudes towards constructive feedback and the ability to make informed decisions as well as on academic development. The results also showed a significant relationship between improved discipline and commitment to academic studies and other responsibilities. The findings have concluded that participation in the national service programme equips young people with experiential and learning skills as well as behavioural maturity improvement that significantly influence their discipline level, academic development, attitudes towards constructive feedback and informed decision-making process. Therefore, the research recommends that the government should establish a diploma or degree programme for national service programme to increase its academic and career development scope.

Keywords: national service, academic performance, discipline level, attitudes to constructive feedback, informed decision-making, and career development.

الخلاصة

انصب التركيز الأساسي لهذه الدراسة على التحقق من تأثير برنامج الخدمة الوطنية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة بين الشباب الإماراتي بعد المرحلة الثانوية على تطورهم الأكاديمي في مؤسسات التعليم العالي وبالتالي تطورهم الوظيفي في المستقبل. وتحقيقاً لهذا الغرض، تم وضع ثلاثة أهداف بحثية محددة لتوجيه تطور الدراسة. حيث تمثل الهدف الأول في تقييم المهارات التجريبية والتعليمية التي يتم تعلمها في برنامج الخدمة الوطنية والتي تؤثر على مستوى الانضباط بين الخريجين أثناء التحاقهم بمؤسسات التعليم العالي. بينما تمثل الهدف الثاني في استكشاف تأثير المشاركة في برنامج الخدمة الوطنية على مواقف طلاب التعليم العالي تجاه التعليقات البناءة. بينما كان الهدف الثالث هو تقييم أثر المشاركة في الخدمة الوطنية على قدرة الخريجين على اتخاذ قرارات واعية فيما يتعلق بالخيارات المهنية. كما تم استخدام طريقة كرة الثلج لأخذ العينات لجمع البيانات من أكبر عدد ممكن من المشاركين. شملت عينة الدراسة 1843 طالب جامعي إماراتي من خريجي برنامج الخدمة الوطنية و 106 من أولياء أمور طلاب الخدمة الوطنية الجامعية و 106 محاضر جامعي.

تم إجراء استبيان تضمن أسئلة مغلقة لجمع بيانات كمية وأسئلة مفتوحة لجمع بيانات نوعية من المشاركين. كما تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها باستخدام نهج أساليب متنوعة تشتمل على التحليل الإحصائي والتحليل الموضوعي. وقبل إجراء تحليل معالجة الأهداف المحددة، تم استخدام نهج وصفي باستخدام توزيع التواتر والنسب المئوية والتمثيل البياني لتحليل البيانات الديمغرافية وجميع البيانات الكمية. كما تم إجراء اختبار أولي آخر لتحليل الأهداف وهو اختبار ألفا كرونباخ لتقدير الموثوقية والصحة من خلال الاتساق الداخلي، والذي أظهر درجة موثوقية وصحة كبيرة في البيانات لإجراء مزيد من التحليل عليها. كما تم استخدام معامل بيرسون لقياس ارتباط عزم حاصل الضرب ونموذج الانحدار الخطي المتعدد لتحليل البيانات وذلك لمعالجة معالجة أهداف الدراسة. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن المهارات الشخصية والنضج السلوكي اللذان تم تعلمهما أثناء أداء الخدمة الوطنية قد أدتا إلى تحسن مستوى الانضباط لدى الطلاب، ومواقفهم تجاه التعليقات البناءة وقدرتهم على اتخاذ قرارات واعية، بالإضافة إلى تطورهم على المستوى الأكاديمي. كما أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة مهمة بين الانضباط المعزز والالتزام بالدراسة الأكاديمية والمسؤوليات الأخرى. ومن بين النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها خلصت الدراسة إلى أن المشاركة في برنامج الخدمة الوطنية تعمل على تزويد الشباب بمهارات تجريبية وتعليمية بالإضافة إلى تحسين نضجهم السلوكي، مما يؤثر بشكل كبير على مستوى انضباطهم، وتطورهم الأكاديمي، ومواقفهم تجاه التعليقات البناءة وعملية اتخاذ القرارات الواعية. وبناء على ذلك، توصي الدراسة البحثية بأن تتيح الحكومة شهادة أو درجة علمية لبرنامج الخدمة الوطنية لزيادة نطاق التطوير الأكاديمي والمهني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخدمة الوطنية، الأداء الأكاديمي، مستوى الانضباط، المواقف تجاه التعليقات البناءة، اتخاذ

القرارات الواعية، والتطوير الوظيفي.

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Chapter 1

Introduction of the Study

1.1 Introduction

The National Service has been established in various countries across the world. The fundamental objectives of the national service are to prepare the youths to be responsible for the future economic and social development of their countries (Barany, 2018). Many countries across the world have established national services for youths who have completed high school education. During the time, young men and women are trained to understand their countries' values and involve in practical skills that prepare them for their career development by improving their characters, relations and moral standards (Pauwels, 2012). Countries with the most established national services and military conscription include the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Saudi Arabia, among others (Theodos et al., 2017). Based on Lim (2018), the structure of national service programmes established earlier in the above countries set the premise for the development and implementation of the UAE's national service.

The national service in the United States has a long history that dates back to the foundation of the country in the 18th century (Cowen, 2006). It takes different forms such as community service where young people apply what they learn in class to help vulnerable people in the society, and military conscription services (Waterman, 2014). The community service program in the United States was developed to allow post-high school youth to engage with the communities by offering voluntary services to people. Through these services, they increase their awareness about the social structure in the country, which sets a significant precedent for understanding the specific needs of different communities (Belfield, 2014). Voluntary services prepare young people by improving their personal development and behavioural maturity,

which they find vital when joining higher learning institutions (Kleiner and Chapman, 2000). In the United States, community service is a non-paying activity where students who have completed secondary school or are currently in higher learning institutions are required to participate, for the community's benefits or a given institution. The service is different from regular volunteering services because it is sometimes performed as a mandatory academic obligation (Waterman, 2014).

Community service might be a requirement by the government as a substitute for criminal justice practices to help young people reform their antisocial behaviour (Waterman, 2014). Engaging young people in these services also help them to learn skills that will make them resourceful for the country in the future (Markus, 1993). In this context, community service in the United States is also referred to as the community payback services in the sense that young people are given an opportunity to give back to the society (Waterman, 2014). Schools and higher learning institutions may establish community service programmes to meet academic requirements, which are often referred to as service-learning.

In some jurisdictions in the United States, students are needed to perform community services during their final year in high school before graduating. For instance, some schools require students to complete a maximum of 200 hours working as community service providers before they can be allowed to graduate and awarded their diploma certificates (Simons et al., 2012). Furthermore, some district schools have differentiated community service from service-learning. According to Waterman (2014), the community services refer to the general social and economic services offered by students to communities to benefit them. On the other hand, service-learning is a community-based service. However, they are conducted to ensure that students apply knowledge from class to carry out activities assigned to them. For example, students can use nursing skills to provide care services to older adults in society (Markus, 1993).

However, whether a school decides to provide the service to their students or not is up to the school because it is not a mandatory obligation for high school students. Throughout the United States, however, an impressive number of high school students are engaging in community services (Markus, 1993). The engagement in community services among college and university students is not a technical requirement to graduate. However, many colleges and universities have included participating in community services as an unofficial requirement before accepting the students (Waterman, 2014). Some colleges and universities require continuing students to spend a specific number of hours in community services spread across their entire stay in the college. Conversely, some learning institutions offer specialised courses in community services (Kleiner and Chapman, 2000).

Even though there are different approaches to community service in the United States, the bottom line is that a student's engagement in community service has three key reasons. First, it helps the student understand the communities around them, which give them an insight into the fundamental national values. Second, through the services, students create a strong foundation for skills and career development in the future. Lastly, understanding the social and economic contexts of communities is a prerequisite to patriotism and appreciation of national values (Waterman, 2014).

The community service in the United Kingdom (UK) has been established as a condition for people who should receive certain services from the government (King et al., 2013). Home Office is the department responsible for managing the community services, which in this context, is a requirement when assessing an individual's qualification status to required benefits (Gilchrist, 2006). However, high school and college students engage in these services in the UK to prepare themselves for future benefits and career development. These compulsory unpaid works are for both learning students and non-student individuals. According to Novick et al.

(2011), this can include up to 300 hours of activities they conduct to offer services to the communities. For colleges and schools that have adopted compulsory unpaid works for students to participate in community services, the hours allocated are spread across the learning duration (King et al., 2013).

Rather than national service that is military-oriented, other countries adopt community services for young people (Pancer et al., 2000). Nevertheless, community services are also meant to give the student experiential skills and appreciate national values. Australia, for instance, adopted the compulsory community services in several regions during the late 2000s with a minimum of 20 hours allocated for the students to participate in community service before they can graduate (Walsh and Black, 2015). Based on the guidelines developed by the Australian government, the community service program was established to provide young people with the opportunities to develop fundamental values and skills as well as understanding the necessity of contributing towards the civic wellbeing. The community service for students in Australia was also based on the premise that it would enable the students to understand, apply and address the core values and norms shared across the country and in the Curriculum Framework. According to Pancer et al. (2000), the community service is unpaid activities carried out in Australia that aim to benefit individuals and communities who are unable to provide for those needs by themselves.

The community services offered by the students to the society in Australia are categorised into two major categories. These include direct and indirect activities based on the nature of the tasks to be completed by the students (Walsh and Black, 2015). The direct activities are defined as those involved in personal contact with individuals receiving the services. Some of these services include mentorship services to new students, care services to the aged individuals, and teaching music to a choir, among others (Pancer et al., 2000). Indirect

activities during the community service include tasks where there is no personal contact. In this case, students provide services individually or collectively to organisations or participating in organised effects, such as planting trees, growing vegetables, and cleaning of the neighbourhood, among others (Walsh and Black, 2015).

Saudi Arabia adopted community services through the ministry of education as a formal system where students offer different services to the communities. The programme grew faster after the Jeddah Flood disaster of 2009 as a way of preparing young people to be responsible and offer assistance to the community in the times of need (Estimo, 2014). Small groups in Jeddah have organised themselves into volunteer teams to assist the needy in the society since the Jeddah flood (Alaish, 2015). The interest in community services in Saudi Arabia is fast growing with both government and private support to such groups. Colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia, especially Jeddah, are also making efforts to institutionalise community services among students and those who have graduated. The aim is to increase awareness about the need to participate in community development as a sign of embracing national values. However, the community service in Saudi Arabia is more of voluntary work than compulsory. According to Alaish (2015), community service among college students in the country does not still have a clear structure.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) introduced the national service for its youths between the ages of 18 to 30 in 2014. The programme received widespread support across the country because it enhanced the national identity of its youth and patriotism. The President, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, signed into law the legislative measure that focused on introducing the military service (Lim, 2018). The law requires that all young men who have completed secondary school to go through the program for 12 months. Initially, this was set to 9 months, but then consecutively increased to 16 months (Sankar, 2018). Besides, it

mandates that persons who have not finished secondary school should serve for two years. The service is optional for women, who may be trained for nine months, regardless of their education, according to the law. During the service, recruits are drafted with military skills and experiential knowledge that would enhance their ability in dealing with geopolitical, social and economic challenges that affect the country (Lim, 2018).

The design of the national services was developed in the initial stage to increase the number of nationals in the reserve army as a way of boosting the security within the borders (Barany, 2018). However, there are other non-military trainings included in the syllabus. The NS programme was developed to run two classes of new recruits and those in the final stage consisting between 6000 – 8000 trainees. The curriculum is designed with a syllabus that covers the following: adjustment of young peoples' attitudes, social relationship, physical training lessons, military training, theoretical courses and specialised and applied training (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). Apart from improving physical health and military skills, the syllabus was designed to improve positive attitudes, behavioural maturity, commitment to responsibilities, discipline and informed decision-making ability.

These experiential skills, knowledge and understanding of the national values assist the alumni in improving their personal development and behavioural maturity before joining higher learning institutions. They are therefore most likely to achieve higher academic performance in higher learning education because as explained, the service improves discipline, ethical practices, positive views about the world and the ability to make informed decisions (Barany, 2018). High discipline level and ethical practices have related to high academic performance because highly disciplined students conduct themselves in adherence to university rules, attend classes regularly and become more attentive to teaching and constructive feedback from their

lecturers (Foncha et al., 2017). High academic performance is attainable when the learner is committed to undertaking learning activities.

The national service program teaches participant knowledge about self-reliance and military skills to protect the country. It gives the youth soft skills such as social and emotional intelligence, personal characters and attitude improvement, effective communication skills and career development attributes, needed to succeed in different workplace environments (Asali, 2015). Moreover, the programme provides better work opportunities because the government gives NS alumni priority when offering employment opportunities to young men (Salem, 2014). The program further aims to develop core competency skills in participants including, but not limited to interpersonal skills, problem-solving capacity and leadership capabilities. In this study, academic performance and career development will be the primary evaluation factor. Academic development, for purposes of this study, will be defined as the test scores of students in their examinable subjects. Furthermore, academic performance will be treated as a reflector of successful career development in post-education life.

1.2 Problem statement

The UAE government adopted the national services in order to conduct military conscription to increase its reserve forces and to transform the social and cultural understanding among the youth through competency-based, experiential and learning skills (Lim, 2018). These would lead to their improved understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic contexts of the nation. The skills and awareness of society that were included in the programme are likely to help NS alumni make informed decisions when choosing their degree and diploma programmes at the university. Simultaneously, NS alumni acquire high standards of discipline and moral practices that play a crucial role in their higher learning education (Lim, 2018). The resources allocated to run the programme are expected to provide positive returns by preparing

the youth and young adults for further education and career development opportunities (Markus et al., 1993; and Lim, 2018). Thus, the main issue of concern is the influence of the programme on the academic performance of young people when they progress to higher education. The bottom line in this context is that good academic background is essential in the development of human resources that will play a vital role in the future the social, cultural and economic development of the country. The national service program is therefore adopted as part of the essential tools used in preparing the post-high school young people to successfully progress academically in order to develop the right knowledge, skills and competencies to engage in essential duties in the development of the UAE.

The national service program established in the country contributes significantly to the personal development and positive behavioural transformation among the participants (Bonnie et al., 2015). Based on this background, this study seeks to explore the extent to which the implementation of national service by the government will improve the academic performance of NS alumni in higher learning institutions and career development. The young people aged 18-30 years are in their prime period of education career development (Lim, 2018), and the national service will have a significant effect on their career prospects and development. Through personal growth and positive behavioural development, the views and perceptions about society among young people influence their career choices and how hard they work to achieve academic excellence in their colleges. The national service programme influences their academic performance in higher learning institutions by putting them in a better place to integrate classroom skills with fieldwork and social life (Barany, 2018). In this regard, this study will investigate the influence of the implementation of the national service programme on the career choices in relations to the students' attitudes towards given academic programmes.

There is a significant gap in the current literature on the national service and its influence on the performance of the students attending higher education institutions after completing the program. According to Lim (2018), there is limited academic research conducted in the Middle East region on the influence of the national service and related programmes on the academic development of the candidates attending higher learning education after completing the service. The knowledge of the national service programme and its influence on the success of students in their higher education studies is a concept that has not been tested through a research study in the Middle East region. Furthermore, no research has been conducted in the UAE towards the implementation benefits of the national service program on academic development once the participants complete the programme and proceed towards their higher learning institutions. These gaps are what drives the current study on the UAE national service and its contribution to academic excellence. Since the service exposes students to practical and non-curriculum training as well as community service, it enhances their ability to integrating classwork with the practical experience in the field. Thus, this study seeks to examine the influence of the national service program on the academic excellence of college and university students in the UAE as an effort to address the knowledge gap identified above.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of the United Arab Emirates national service on the academic development of Emirati higher education students in their first year of college or university once they have completed the national service programme. The study will explore the fundamental elements of national service programme such as its purpose in boosting military reserve forces, physical health, discipline, attitude and soft skills training through the curriculum designed for the service. It also explores the advantages and potential disadvantages of the national programme. The study explores the establishment of national

services in similar programmes in different countries and how they influence the trainees' academic development and career opportunities. The study integrates the findings with the theories supporting the research such as experiential learning theory, symbolic interactionism, transformative learning theory, and social learning theory. Through the descriptive and inferential analysis of quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative data, this study will show whether completing national service programme is essential in academic performance and career development of students in higher learning institutions. The study also examines and analyses experiential skills and behavioural changes to purposefully check their contribution to positive academic performance and career development of national service alumni in higher learning institutions.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

Study aims and objectives are developed to help in defining the primary and secondary focus of the study. Farrugia et al. (2010) has stated that the study's aim and objectives are essential to providing a guide to developing the procedure and design of the research study as well as determining the scope and influence of the study to the target audience.

Main Research Aim

To examine the influence of the national service programme in the UAE on the alumni's academic development in higher learning institutions.

Objectives

Objective 1: To assess the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influences the level of discipline among the alumni while in higher learning institutions

Objective 2: To explore the influence of participating in the national service program on the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback

Objective 3: To examine the influence of the candidate participation in the national service program on their ability to make informed decisions on the occupational choices

1.5 Research Questions

The questions are categorised into a primary research question and three secondary research questions as follows.

Primary Research Question

To what extent does the national service programme in the UAE influence alumni's academic development in higher education institutions?

Sub-research questions

Sub-RQ1: To what extent do the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service influences the level of discipline among the alumni while in higher learning institutions?

Sub-RQ2: How does participating in the national service programme influence the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback?

Sub-RQ3: In which ways do the participation in the national service program affect the national service alumni's ability to make informed decisions on the occupational choices?

1.6 Rationale of the study

The national service programme was implemented to develop and prepare young people to take up roles in the security sector, and to participate in the social, cultural and economic

advancement of the UAE (Lim, 2018). While the focus of the national programme is on positive socio-cultural and economic development, this achievement can only be realised through a strong educational foundation and development for prospective careers in the future. The academic performance of young people in the UAE is an important instrument that will enable them to achieve success in their future endeavours and create skilled human resources for the development of modern labour market in the economy. It is therefore essential to understand the ‘influence’ of the national service on academic performance at higher education and career development among the national service programme alumni. According to Wellons (2013), the national service period gives the students opportunities of engaging in experiential learning and self-discovery, which is significant in identifying their potential career lines and relevant courses they can take in the university to achieve those career dreams. During the programme, the students are exposed to the national culture, values, social challenges and national security measures (Lim, 2018). They learn and apply various strategies and mitigation plans to control these problems. Future NS students are also trained to be disciplined, hardworking and develop modern world perception when solving problems. Thus, attending the national service programme will play a significant role in the decisive reorientation of students in their discipline level, attitudes and perceptions. Although no current study has linked these attributes learnt at NS, to academic performance in higher education, they have always played a significant role in making informed decisions, focusing on academic work and career development among students in higher education.

According to Whitney (2012), 18-year-old individuals who have just graduated from high school believe that the world provides a particular excitement with overwhelming rewards. However, this is not the case, and without an adequate understanding of the world, the level of responsibilities among post-secondary school youth may decrease. Such a scenario may put the

future of the country at risk when the time comes for the young people to play significant roles in national development. Irresponsible individuals might not take the right path in their career choices and development during their time in colleges and universities, which would mean the production of ineffective human resources in the country. The introduction of the national service programme will act as an intervening factor that will assist the high school graduates in achieving personal growth, behavioural transformation, and perception about the world in terms of potential challenges they will face in the future and how best they can be solved. The 16-month assignment to serve in the national service is believed to expose the high school graduates and young people to the real-world challenges that will spur their personal and behavioural maturity by forming a different perception of the world (Barany, 2018). As such, the national service will instil the sense of purpose and relevance among the young people beforehand as they prepare to join colleges and universities for career development. The national service provides students with something that is missing in the high school curriculum, to prepare them for the future academic commitment and career development in higher learning institutions.

Understanding the national ethics and values is a prerequisite to personal responsibility, integrity and patriotism. The national service is established in the UAE to help instil the ethical and core values of service to the country among young people, which will act as a ritual passage to adulthood. Therefore, as students join higher education, they commit themselves to attain academic development, knowing that success will significantly influence their contribution to national development. Thus, the rationale of this study is significantly grounded on the assertion that high school graduates who join the national service before joining the higher learning institutions are more likely to achieve greater academic success than those who join higher learning institutions directly from high school (Lim, 2018; and Barany, 2018). This is due to

the intervening role of the national service of enlightening young people by exposing them to the practical challenges of the world.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Much different and varied literature highlights the existence of national service programs in other parts of the world. However, they fail to highlight the impact of those programmes on academic performance (Barany, 2018). As a result, it is imperative to understand all the parameters that determine academic success after participating in the program and their relevance in the developing capable human resources for national development. The insights from this study will enhance the integration of national service programs in the education sector as part of the standard improvement in education and career development. Besides, it will support the argument posited by Lim (2018) that the expansion of the program in the UAE is essential due to its benefits and hence its adoption in other countries in the region (Salama, 2014). National service programs require significant capital investment (Ruschmann, 2003). Consequently, it is vital to review the program to identify its impact on national goals and aspirations. The findings of the study will also help in evaluating the effectiveness of the national service in the UAE and whether the government should increase its funding as part of the national development programs.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters: introduction, research context, literature review, methodology, results, analysis and discussions, and conclusion chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study by including the background information, justification of the study, and study gaps based on what previous researchers had done in the field.

Chapter 2 highlights the research context for the entire study concerning NS. The chapter provides background information about UAE and explores the purpose and design of NS. The chapter further highlights the laws and regulations concerning NS.

Chapter 3 is the literature review chapter that is divided into three main sections. The first section is the theoretical framework that includes relevant theories and concepts used to justify and understand the study topic. The second section is the literature review section, where the researcher does critical analysis, summarises and reviews the previous studies. The third section includes a conceptual model showing the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Chapter 4 illustrates the methodology of the research study. It shows the philosophical approach used to develop the study, research design, study population, sampling technique and sample size. The chapter also discusses the quantitative data collection tools and techniques used as well as the descriptive and inferential statistical techniques used to analyse the numerical data to answer the research questions and achieve study objectives. The chapter also includes an ethical consideration section that addresses ethical issues that were considered in conducting this study.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from the analysis of collected data using quantitative methods. This chapter is divided into four main sections: descriptive analysis for sociodemographic data of the participants, Cronbach's Alpha analysis to check the reliability and validity of internal consistency of the data to be used in inferential statistical analysis. The third section of the chapter presents results from the inferential statistical data analysis. Pearson's correlation and linear regression and the inferential statistical techniques are used to analyse the numerical data collected using the questionnaire tool. The fourth section is the

discussion section, which integrates the study findings with those of the previous studies and assesses the study objectives have been achieved.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the findings. The summary section provides an overall summary of the findings based on methods of analysis and results.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of the study, and it is divided into two parts, which are conclusion and recommendations. The first section provides the overall conclusion based on the findings, analysis and discussions drawn from the findings. The last section of chapter 7 is recommendations for future research.

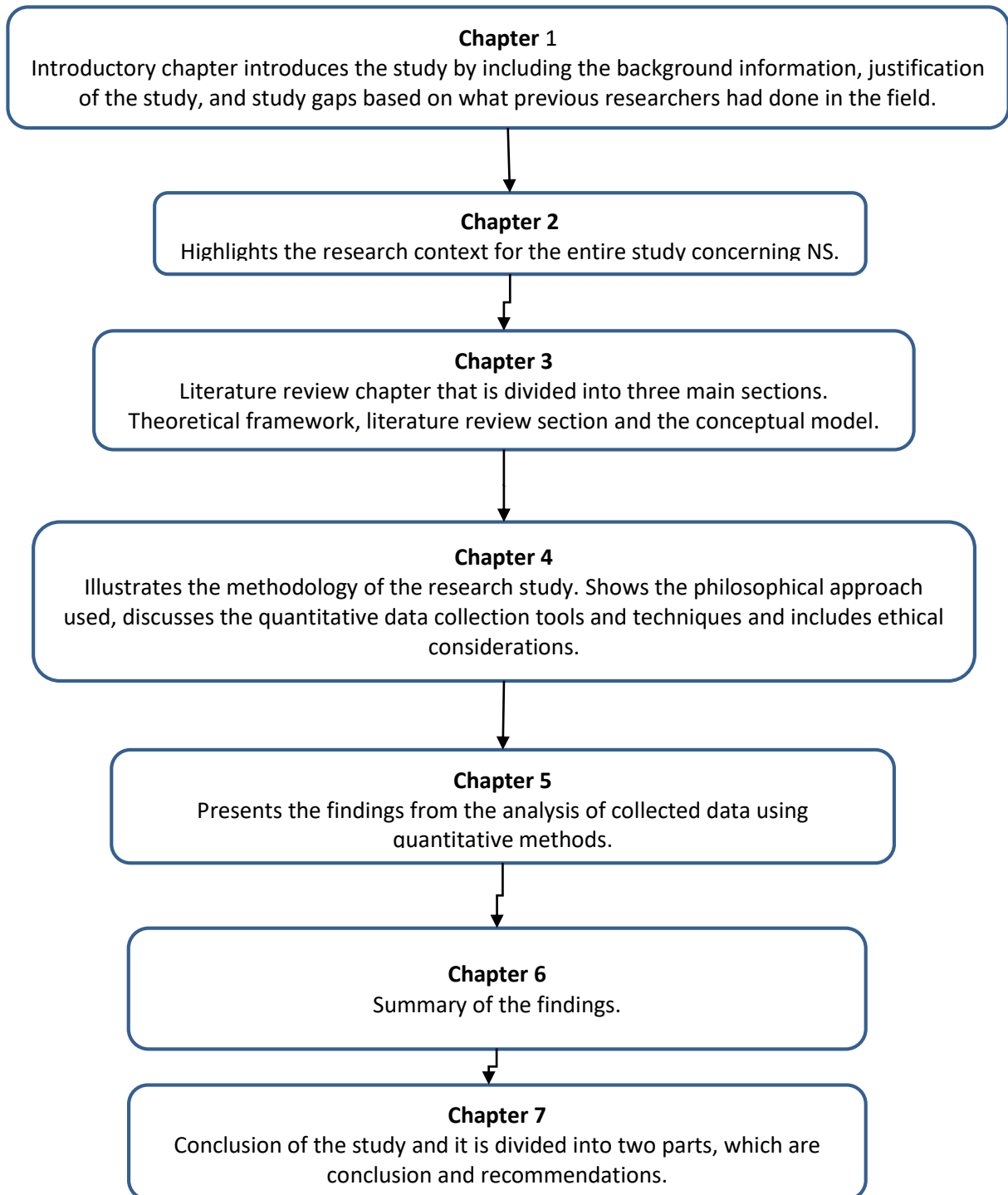


Figure 01.0001: The structure and relationships between the thesis chapters

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

The first chapter introduced our research study to show what is expected in other subsequent chapters. It provided background information about the influence of NS and other

related programmes across the world on the academic development of alumni in their higher learning education. Based on the problem statement, NS is a UAE government programme for young men aged 18-30, but it is under review to establish if the same has more benefits. In this context, the study assesses its influence on academic development as one of the critical issues of concern. Thus, the purpose of the research study is to determine whether the NS programme in the UAE has a positive influence on discipline level, attitudes towards constructive feedback, commitment to responsibilities and academic development of alumni in their higher learning education and hence career development. The main objective of the study is to examine the influence of the national service programme in the UAE on the alumni's academic development in higher learning institutions. The rationale behind the study is that a national service program was implemented to develop and prepare young people to take up roles in security, social, cultural and economic advancement of the UAE. However, this achievement can only be realised through a strong educational foundation and development for prospective careers in the future. The findings of this study will help the government and stakeholders in the UAE education sector to review and improve NS training to enhance academic development and career development. The chapter concludes by providing the overall structure of the dissertation showing the sequential flow of chapters from the first to the seventh one and what they cover.

Chapter 2

Research Context

2.1 Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a Middle Eastern country located in the Western Asian region. It is specifically located at the furthest end of the northeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula of the Persian Gulf. It borders the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west and south. It also borders Oman to the East (Khalid and Nahyan, 2015). To the west, the UAE shares a maritime border with Qatar and Iran to the northern part. It is a sovereign country under the monarch rule with a federal system of government composed of seven emirates. The emirates include Abu Dhabi, Umm Al Quwain, Dubai and Ajman as well as Fujairah, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah. Abu Dhabi is the capital emirate of the UAE. The emirates have an enclave type of boundaries, and each of them is governed by a leader called Emir. The seven Emirs come together to establish the Federal Supreme Council while one of the Emirs serves as the UAE President. The total population of the UAE was estimated to be 9.68 million people (ThemediaLab, 2019)

2.2 History of the United Arab Emirates

The history of the UAE goes beyond the establishment and union of the seven emirates and its subsequent formation. Nevertheless, the union of the seven emirates and establishment of the UAE became the turning point in the Trucial Coast region's long-standing history (Heard-Bey, 2017). The successful unification of the emirates and establishment of a sovereign country in the name of the United Arab Emirates gave it a rightful recognition as a modern state in the international community context. Studies show that the UAE has a rich history and culture that dates back to the pre-historical times based on the discovered artefacts and ancient Arabic documents. The process of advancement of the civilisation in the United Arab Emirates is

based on the explorations made in the region and can be traced from 4000 BC (Peterson, 2017). According to the archaeological facts, people lived in the region during the Neolithic period.

Apart from its history and early civilisation, the UAE and the entire Gulf region have strategic geographical locations in the Middle East, making them more attractive to foreign exploration. This explains the conflicts launched by foreign powers such as Portuguese, French and British to take control of the Gulf region since the 16th century (Peterson, 2017). Their objective was to have economic and political control of the surrounding maritime trade in the coastal region. According to Scott (2016), the regional and local powers emerged in order to defend their socio-economic and political rights over home resources. The first European power to invade the Arabian Gulf was the Portuguese. Portugal deployed military into the region led by two famous army commanders; Albuquerque and Vasco da Gama (Heard-Bey, 2017). The French and British powers followed, and these invasions resulted in bloody conflicts that led to many Arab and Muslim casualties. The conflicts led to the destruction of Khor Fakkan City.

Portuguese colonised the Arabian Gulf in the early 16th century and continued throughout the better part of the century. However, the continued resistance of the local people weakened their strongholds in the region with time (Heard-Bey, 2017). At the same time, there was intense competition for the occupation of the region from the Dutch, British and French powers. They wanted to control the seas so that they can take charge of the lucrative maritime trade. In 1617, the British Empire founded the East Indian Company as a foundation for its protectorate in India and the Gulf region (Peterson, 2017; Scott, 2016). The company was expanded to increase British power over the Portuguese. In 1625, the British power expelled the Portuguese occupants in the region. In 1766, they were finally put out of competition for the occupation, giving the British a monopolistic control of the region (Khalid and Nahyan, 2015).

In the early 19th century, two regional powers controlled by Arabs emerged to challenge the existence of the East Indian Company and the entire British protectorate in the region (Peterson, 2017). The Bani Yas tribe was the first to raise power against the British colonies. The tribe had significant control of the lower region of Arabian Gulf in the present day's Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The second tribe was Al Qawasim, which was based in Ras Al Khaimah (Scott, 2016). They gained the power to challenge British colonies through extensive maritime trade and naval fleets, which they used to fight British ships and fleets in the Indian Ocean (Khalid and Nahyan, 2015). However, the Gulf region remained under the control of the British Empire, who based their dominance on three central policies. These included the fight against the local rebels whom they referred to as pirates, fight against the ongoing slave trade, and the domination of the maritime trade. The three policies were used as justifications by the British Empire to expand its presence in the region (Peterson, 2017).

Britain continued their dominance until 1820 when they signed a treaty with Oman's sheikhs, which led to the formation of the Trucial Coast (Scott, 2016). It was followed by the Perpetual Maritime Peace Treaty, which was signed in 1853 to achieve peaceful coexistence and economic development along the Gulf's coastal region (Heard-Bey, 2017). The treaties gave the locals rights to maritime trade, especially the maritime trade that collapsed in the 1930s, leading to significant economic hardship among the coastal communities (Khalid and Nahyan, 2015). The decision by the British power to withdraw from the Trucial Coast in 1968, led to the foundation of the federal states within the Trucial Coast. Consequently, the Trucial States became independent and formed the sovereign state of the UAE in 1971 (Scott, 2016).

2.3 Purpose and Design of National Service

Since the independence of the seven emirates of the UAE in 1971 after the withdrawal of British rule, the country has faced several military conflicts internally and regionally. The

Middle East, as a whole, has been shaky over the years due to aggressive military operations by the Gulf States and foreign powers from the West and the East (Hurewitz, 1980). The civilian uprising during the Arab Spring that occurred in various Arab states, including Oman in 2011 was the height of regular military conflict in the region (Peterson, 2017). The purpose of establishing the national service was to increase the military reserves so that the country can control external threats (Lim, 2018). The military conscription is the crucial purpose for recruiting the youth in the national service programme.

2.4 Policy and Practice of National Service

The national service was established to increase the national defence and supplement its military reserves, as the UAE President, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed proposed in 2014. According to the initial plan, Emirati males aged between 18 and 30 years were to attend the compulsory NS programme (Abdulkarim, 2017). The national service was at first designed to take nine months for the pioneer students, but the period was later increased to 12 months in 2016 (Emirates News Agency, 2016). In 2016, the Federation Council of the UAE reviewed the programme and extended it to 16 months for all male Emirati in the 18 to 30 year age bracket, as shown in the flow chart of figure 2.1 below (U.AE, 2020). Since then, the government, through the Ministry of Defence, have been recruiting individuals who have completed their secondary education into the national service to undergo military conscription and life adjustment experience to prepare them for future challenges (U.AE, 2020).

The legislation was developed to implement the national service programme as mandatory for all males who have completed secondary school. Nevertheless, the programme was made optional for females under the same age bracket. For the females to participate, the law required that they should receive permission from their parents. The UAE government, under the national service law, developed a three-step qualification criteria assessment for

admission into the system. The first step requires candidates to be within the 18 to 29 year age bracket during the time of admission. Secondly, the candidates must be medically fit, and they must have obtained the approval from National and Reserve Service Committee (NRSC). Thirdly, recruitment regulations provide for both temporary and permanent exceptions for individuals within the age bracket, depending on their conditions. Temporary exceptions are applied to candidates who meet the recruitment criteria, but they are the sole providers of their families. Permanent exception from participating in the national service is given to candidates who have a physical and mental inability. (UAENSR.AE,2020).

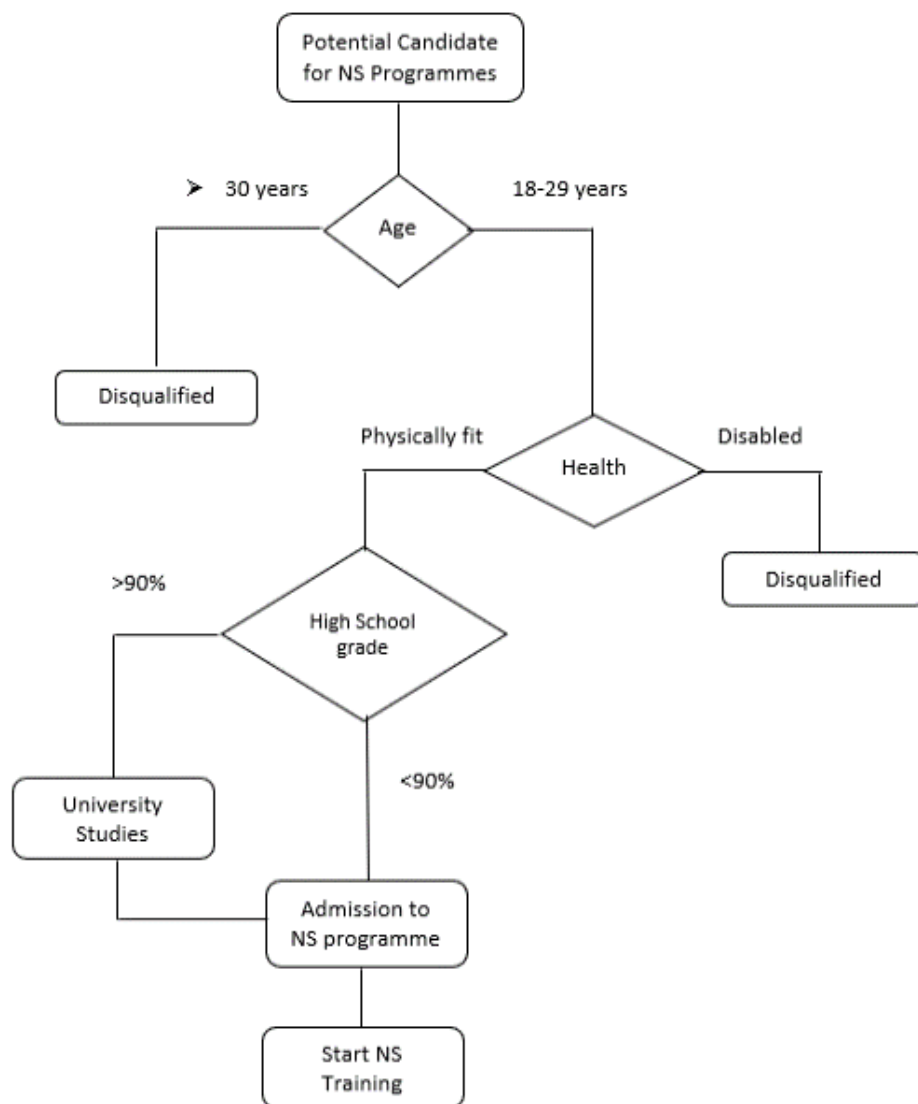


Figure 2.001: Flow chart showing the legal structure for admission in UAE national service programme

2.5 Exemptions from National Service

NS candidates who have scored 90% and above in their final exams in high schools are exempted by the NS law and exempts them from joining the national service so that they can further their studies in higher learning institutions first. However, they must join the national service before reaching 29 years of age. Since the year 2018, the bar of 90% has been increased to 95% and above for the above exemption. The law also exempts individuals aged 18 years and above but are still in secondary schools. They are allowed to complete the secondary education, provided that they do it when they are younger than 29 years. The 2016 review of the NS law also required that individuals who have not attended secondary education must attend the programme for up to 24 months. The law requires that women who volunteer to participate in the national service programme upon their parents' consent can serve for nine months.

Additionally, the sole son of a family and medically unfit citizens are exempted from military service. Those who sustain their parents or siblings with special needs, and those are serving jail terms would benefit from a temporary exemption (U.AE, 2020).

Further exemptions are provided to military personnel employed in an institution affiliated with National service and to students of military and defence training academies. Additionally, the exemption is provided to those who have completed at least one year of service with the armed forces or police institutions that provide specialised training of a military nature. (Alterman and Balboni, 2017).

2.6 Employer support for National Service candidates

The national service laws outline the employer's responsibility for their employees who will participate in the programme. The employers are required by the law to ensure that all their employees are admitted to the NS programme before they reach 29 years. For the employees

who have joined the NS programmes, their employers are required to maintain their job relationship, including job positions, pending promotions and salary adjustments as well as retirement benefits and pensions upon their return. An individual who has completed the national service programme has the right to be reinstated in their jobs by the employer. An employee in the NS programme is entitled to the same salary and other benefits from their jobs: the UAE government pays 50 % of the earnings while the employer pays the remaining 50%. Furthermore, when calculating retirement benefits and pensions, the law requires employers to account for the 16 months in the NS training programme (uaensr.ae, 2020).

2.7 The NS Curriculum Design

According to Alterman and Balboni (2017), the NS programme was established to run two classes with between 6000 and 8000 trainees every year. The classes are for the first year conscripts or trainees and the second year respectively. The annual enrollment was planned to be stabilised at 5000 trainees for each of the two classes every year (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). The classes and other training resources are established in five different military camps designated for the service according to the 2016 reviewed duration of training and regulations. There are several skills designed for the recruits to train on during the period. These include the following courses.

2.7.1 Adjusting Attitudes of Young People

The first important course that students undergo during the NS training is the techniques of adjusting their attitudes towards their social and cultural environments, which involves re-education of the young people (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). In this context, the trainees are introduced into an environment, which is designed to uncover patterns of entitlements aimed at instilling obedience to the chain of commands and respect to the leaders. The training has foundational importance for the students to learn how to obey the regulations in their

environments of operations. These include the development of the trainees' positive attitudes towards constructive criticism and feedback for their performance by the leaders. According to Barany (2018), the adjustment of the attitude to the real-world challenges also prepared the recruits in maintaining desired behaviour and attitude in their studies or workplace environment.

The process of adjusting attitudes starts immediately once the recruits join the NS service programme by shaving their hair and changing into an official uniform, that they must always put on during training and as part of their official wear in the training camp. Subsequently, the recruits are placed under regulations which they must follow during their stay. The objective of this approach is to train young people on the importance of being obedient and maintain positive attitudes towards whatever they are doing (Lim, 2018).

Wherever the trainees goes and whatever they do during the training, they are required to march in given formation according to the guidelines. The objective is to instil discipline in the trainees, which is not just done physically but also include a series of social and religious understanding training. According to Alterman and Balboni (2017), it is a mandatory requirement for the recruits that they are required to pray five times a day irrespective of whether they are undertaking their duties or whether they are within the on-base mosques. The constant prayers, as Lim (2018) explains, is aimed at strengthening their understanding about the importance of religion in the country. During the training, they have to obey internal rules and regulations such as the mandatory making of their beds, doing their laundry works, and cleaning their bathrooms. These tasks are typically for domestic workers or according to the local culture are designated for female relatives in the normal civilian life (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). However, they are trained to do these tasks in order to understand them, develop a positive attitude towards completing these tasks so that they can be responsible and help

females in case there is a need to do so. The initial phase, according to Alterman and Balboni (2017), often leaves the recruits in the state of shock because they have never been ordered around in their private life. In this context, the objective is to change the trainees' perception of life.

2.7.2 Social Relationships

The social relationship is a new dimension among the recruits, especially those who have just graduated from high schools. The national service occurs in a context with diverse groups and individuals coming from different family and cultural backgrounds. The rationale behind the social relationships training is to improve tolerance and understanding of people from different backgrounds. It improves the performance of an individual in a diverse socio-cultural environment. According to Alterman and Balboni (2017), the modern corporate environment is characterised by diversity, and young people must learn to understand the significance of a diverse environment, which will be a common encounter in their future. Thus, learning to live with diverse people and working in teams is a significant element of the national service training (Barany, 2018). It strengthens the ability to develop a relationship in a diverse environment and form a working team. Furthermore, trainees share their background information and learn about the national values from each other.

The report developed by Alterman and Balboni (2017) shows that trainees form positive bonds fast with each other during this training process. They develop compelling interest and closeness with each other to succeed as a team because of the related rewards as well as punishment that are imposed on them depending positive or negative progress of their relationship. To improve relationships among trainees, a rule was established to limit the use of mobile phones (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). The objective is to allocate more time for them to have intense social interaction rather than running the risk of having some trainees diverting

their attention to mobile phones. As a result, the intense nature of the social relationship of the national service, the recruits who tend to be shy and uncomfortable when there are different people around them learn to socialise (Asali, 2015). The recruits are often required to report to the camps that are the closest to their homes for gradual social relationship adjustment. The near home camp often applies to the recruits who have just completed their secondary school and may feel more uncomfortable when they are far from the home environment. Although the resulting mix at the national service training camp sometimes lacks geographic diversity, the arrangement creates a conducive environment to develop a socioeconomically diverse environment for young people.

2.7.3 Physical Training Lessons

The UAE national service programme developed an aggressive strategy aimed at improving health, fitness and general wellbeing of the trainees. According to Alterman and Balboni (2017), the recruits are issued with special “passport” documents, including the crucial statistics about their health and fitness as a way of encouraging constructive competition among the peers. The health and wellbeing status of the trainees are reviewed every week by the higher authorities to monitor their progress. Apart from being part of military conscription plan, physical training is also conducted to educate the trainees about the significance of health, physical fitness and general wellbeing (Asali, 2015; Al Subaihi, 2017). They also encourage involvement in various extra-curriculum activities. The physical training provided at the national service programme was adopted from the United States Army training called “total force fitness” matrix (Alterman and Balboni, 2017).

The training matrix is a holistic framework that is done to teach the trainees about physical and psychological health and how to maintain them. These include both social, spiritual and behavioural, as well as, family health. According to Asali (2015), these aspects

allow young people to develop physical abilities and mental wellbeing as well as positive attitudes in everything important they engage in, during and after national service programmes. The wellness programme is essential in developing both military reserve and human capital resources for the future socio-economic development of the country (Asali, 2015; Lim, 2018; Al Subaihi, 2017). These are also achieved using various games for continuous physical training and competition among peers. During physical training, the students also get ample time to continue socialising and developing closeness.

2.7.4 Military Training

The Middle East has been marred with military conflicts and terrorism over the years, making any stable study to be at risk of potential attacks by external forces. As a result, one of the key reasons why the Emirati government established the national service was to increase the military force reserves that could protect its borders from potential external attacks. Therefore, conscription is a fundamental goal of the national service programme (Abdulkarim, 2017; Lim, 2018). Through the national service programme, the government of the UAE provide young people with the basic military training that include essential skills of handling and using certain weapons, field crafting and marksmanship among others (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). These are military reserves that can be called upon when the country is at the risk of going to war. Simultaneously, interested candidates are absorbed in the military training facilities to join various armed forces departments.

During the military training, they must pass timed tests in basic military techniques and handling of weaponry. In order to reduce the risks, especially among the trainees who are unwilling to join the forces in the future, the training starts from the electronic systems with the simulated weapons, before the trainees are exposed to the handling of the live weapons, before drafting in various field techniques (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). The physical military

training during the national service is accompanied by the courses in field-crafting that expose the candidates to endurance skills and being resourceful at the time of need. In this line, they are taken to a desert trip to learn survival skills, where they dig their own trenches to sleep on overnight. In the process, they get the hands-on skills that are needed in real-world challenges (Asali, 2015). According to Alterman and Balboni (2017), they do other tasks, such as clearing obstacles and completion of missions in both simulated and physical environments, as a way of improving their experiential skills.

These are essential elements which are not only focused on the military but also mirror the basic training approaches and necessity of developing survival and experiential skills to solve real-world problems. According to the findings by Lim (2018) about the perception of the young people about the programme, some trainees who participated in the programme during the first batches were sceptical about the preparedness of the recruits for the active military duty. However, the scope of the military was aimed at preparing young people with survival skills and techniques needed in actual human society. In this context, they understand themselves and appreciate their potential as well as the society at large (Abdulkarim, 2017; Al Subaihi, 2017). The training is foreign to the recruits and exposes them to a new and challenging environment. Critics of the conscription process, however, feel that the duration of training is concise and therefore not enough for them to gain the effective force of participating in real military activities (Lim, 2018). However, Barany (2018) finds that these are antecedents of understanding the real-life challenges and the ability to device a way to survive under challenging conditions.

2.7.5 Theoretical Courses

Apart from the physical and military training, the national service also provides classroom-based learning to teach the theoretical skills in various aspects. These include

concepts on military conscription, legal affairs of the country, civil education and subjects related to the security of the nation. As Asali (2015) explains, the theoretical learning in the national services exposes the young people to socioeconomic and political aspects of the country. The theoretical aspect of the national service programme is a significant part of the civic education that the recruits learn in order to understand the national value, cultural and religious formations, social and economic aspects of the UAE. According to Alterman and Balboni (2017), increasing the number of reserve armed force troops is actually not the ultimate aim of the national service, as it was constituted in 2014. Although the NS alumni could be called on in case of emergency, the main objectives are to equip the young men and women with the national values and principles as well as relevant knowledge that will protect them against false or destructive beliefs and attitudes. The theoretical courses are meant to nurture young people into more responsible, respectful and principled individuals, guided by core values (Lim, 2018). According to Al Subaihi (2017), the training helps the young people to live a worthy life and prevent them from joining hostile movements and instead assume responsibilities of building the nation instead of building false hope in antisocial organisations. Through these classes, the trainees understand society better, and this opens their mind to understanding and appreciating diversities within the country. The lessons also invoke legal and Quranic views on morality, obedience and responsibility, among other fundamental principles and social values (Alterman and Balboni, 2017).

2.7.6 Specialized and Applied Training

During the second and third phases of the NS programme, the trainees learn soft skills on specific jobs they are talented or interested in pursuing in the future. The young people take three months to complete specialised training in different key areas (Barany, 2018; Asali, 2015). They are categorised into armed forces training, working in government institutions, such as

the Ministry of Defense, Interior Ministry, and National Security Service departments. The specialised skills learnt during this period is then followed by several months of undergoing what is referred to as applied training (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). At this stage, they are placed on an internship to apply what they have learnt during the specialised training in their assigned roles. The applied training exposes the trainees to real-world challenges they have to solve and how those solutions create social and economic values to different people.

At the specialisation stage, the leaders of the programme are allowed to train recruits so that they can perform specific tasks using the relevant skills during their internship and in case of an emergency (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). The majority of these trainees may specialise in military skills so that they can be permanently absorbed in the armed forces while others may learn government service provision skills. The specialised and applied training included in the programme also helps the national service leaders to identify special talents that can be nurtured through formal education for future application in the military and government departments (Asali, 2015; Barany, 2018). After the trainees have received specialised training, and upon identification of the talents, some may be selected to be officers in the reserve troop. In contrast, others may be trained by the government in higher learning institutions to come back and serve (Lim, 2018). Defence officials use this opportunity to train and develop talented conscripts who are directly absorbed into the general armed forces, and into the most elite roles (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). The approach depicts the national service as one of the most important programmes that groom young people and develop future human resources.

2.8 Advantages of attending National Service

As explained by Lim (2018), the experiential skills, knowledge and understanding of the national values assist the alumni in improving their personal development and behavioural maturity before joining higher learning institutions. They are therefore most likely to achieve

higher academic performance in higher education learning because as explained, it improves discipline, ethical practices, positive views about the world and ability to make an informed decision (Barany, 2018). As depicted by Barany (2018), the NS programme instils a high level of discipline, reorients their attitudinal and behavioural characters, expose learners to various challenges and provide skills for dealing with those challenges. According to Froncha et al. (2017), high discipline level and ethical practices have a significant link with excellent academic performance because highly disciplined students conduct themselves in adherence to university rules. These include regular classes attendance, attentiveness to lectures and positive attitudes towards constructive feedback from their lecturers (Foncha et al., 2017). High academic performance is attainable when the learner is committed to undertaking learning activities.

The national service program teaches participant self-reliance knowledge and military skills to protect the country (Lim, 2018). It gives the youth soft skills such as social and emotional intelligence, personal characters and attitude improvement, effective communication skills and career development attributes needed to succeed in different workplace environments (Asali, 2015). Moreover, the programme provides a work opportunity because the government gives alumni priority when offering employment opportunities to young men (Salem, 2014). The program develops core competency skills for the alumni such as interpersonal skills, problem-solving capacity and leadership capabilities. In this study, academic performance and career development will be the primary evaluation factors. For purposes of this study, the evaluation will be defined by the test scores of students in their examinable subjects, and it will be treated as a reflector of successful career development in post-education life.

2.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter highlights the research context for the entire study concerning NS. It provides background information about the UAE in terms of how it was established into a nation in the Middle East region. This included historical development and evolution of the sociopolitical and economic blocks in the coast region to form the United Arab Emirates as a nation. The chapter has also explored the purpose and design of NS in young people who have graduated from secondary schools in the UAE. It has outlined the policies and practices that were implemented to guide the national service programme since its establishment in 2014. These included changes that have been made through the constant review of the NS programme to realign it with the social, cultural, religious and economic needs of the UAE. Since the programme is a government-sponsored mandatory training for males below the age of 30 years, various policy guidelines and regulations have been adopted to accommodate economic and social factors that may affect candidates during their stay at the NS programme, especially among employed people or breadwinners in the family. The regulations integrate both government support and employers' responsibility to support the candidates who have joined the programme to minimise the negative economic impact for them and their families. The chapter also illustrates the curriculum of the National Service program, which included courses such as adjustments of attitudes, relationship development, physical training and military training, theoretical courses, specialised and applied training, reserve duties and programmes for women. Lastly, the chapter outlines the advantages and potential disadvantages of the NS programme, which should be reviewed to improve it and maximise its advantages.

Chapter 3

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies and critically reviews relevant literature and presents the theoretical framework that underpins the research. The chapter has three major sections: the first section is the review of relevant literature; the second section is the theoretical framework, and the last part is a critical evaluation of relevant theories. The literature review section includes critical reviews of previous studies, concepts and theories related to national service among graduates in various contexts and nations. Through the literature reviews and theoretical framework, the researcher can identify gaps and set a stage for the study development that will address those gaps effectively. The critical evaluation of theories includes the list of relevant theories that support the research study. The theoretical framework includes relevant theories that are applied to the current study. They will help to integrate the research findings and analysis with relevant theories. The chapter will help to provide background information to set the ground for the methodology of the research, which includes data collection approaches, analysis, discussion and conclusion.

3.2 Literature Review

The section provides the summaries, critical review and analysis of the previous studies that have been conducted regarding the national service and its influence on the national service program graduates intending to join colleges and universities. The section reviews previous studies and other literature on the subjects of student performance based on Grade Point Average (GPA) attained, moral code of the students, extra-curriculum activities, learning outcomes, and self-esteem as a result of attending national service programme. Many research studies have been conducted to investigate the factors highlighted above concerning

behavioural maturity and experiential skills of the students. The review critically assesses the information that has been studied and recorded on the development of national service programmes in various countries. These include attained and expected benefits of national service programmes to young people, especially those who have completed high school.

3.2.1 Grade Point Average Score

Academic excellence is a factor of many variables, and stakeholders in the education sector always explore the motivational factors that lead to achieving averagely higher academic excellence (McLeod and Cropley, 2013). However, the fundamental question that educationists must answer relates to the relevance of academic excellence for the achievement of societal goals (Daleure, 2017). Academic excellence, according to McLeod and Cropley (2013), can be a great motivator if society accords its youth the benefit of job satisfaction based on better academic results. The national service in the UAE gives special consideration to excellent performing youth to defer their enrolment until they finish their academic journey. However, Barany (2018) explain that they have to attend the service before the age of thirty to gain experiential skills and behavioural maturity, which they need in their future careers. This translates to mean that academic development alone does not make a competent professional in any career if one's experiential skills and behavioural maturity are not reinforced well enough. The influence of the national service initiative on academic performance is, therefore, significant (Cherrier and Belk, 2015).

The connection of the national service for the youth and education is based on certain assumptions that are not founded on factual evidence. The presumption that academic excellence determines the success levels in life is a product of assumption as evidence reveals that academic performance only delivers the benefits in life when combined with other infrastructural facilitation and personal qualities (Lim, 2018; McLeod and Cropley, 2013).

According to Minhas (2016), the national service must implement policies that enhance equity by treating every national youth the same, regardless of their academic excellence to spread its benefits across the board. There is evidence to prove that people who develop positive attitudes and the required competencies exhibit enhanced success in life. Values like self-control and independent decision-making are critical for success in life, and therefore must be integrated with academic excellence in higher education (Minhas, 2016).

Many higher institutions of higher learning tend to focus on high school grades before they allow admissions into their institutions. Grades often exhibit an individual capability from the aspect of academic performance only. It does not focus on the potential of the student in other areas, perceptions, likes and dislikes as well as their understanding of the society (Eyler et al., 2001; Kuh et al., 2008; and Moely and Ilustre, 2011). A student who has attended the national services has acquired both experiential skills, behavioural maturity and social understanding, which effectively reinforces their GPA measures in higher education (Kuh et al., 2008; and Moely and Ilustre, 2011). While moving to the university, a person chooses a career line that will influence his or her entire life. Thus, people need to be more informed beyond the high school grade to make the right choices that will help in maintaining high GPA throughout their stay in colleges and universities (Moely and Ilustre, 2011; and Conway et al., 2009). When a student chooses a wrong course at the university level, they might end up performing poorly. The national service programme exposes students to the new environment and real-world challenges that will help them realise their potential and make informed decisions when selecting courses to pursue (Yorio and Ye, 2012). They will thus, likely to have higher academic performance in terms of their average GPA in each academic year.

Admission into the universities and colleges are not entirely pegged on the applicant's GPA performance in high school. Many universities look for students with the potential of

making a positive influence on others inside and outside classrooms (Conway et al., 2009). This depends on the attitude and perceptions they adopted during and after high school education just before university admission. The purpose of joining the national service program is to shape the behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of the young people to understand the society better and get motivated to participate in its development with a positive mind (Kuh et al., 2008). This improves personal development and behavioural maturity, which are essential to study and comprehend the environment before moving forward with positive intent. Consequently, students will be more informed about themselves and their future academic life as well as career development (Moely and Ilustre, 2011). With the high level of discipline and commitment in the course, they chose after making an informed decision, students are likely to maintain a high GPA.

This is due to the inevitable significance of GPA in measuring classroom success during university studies. The grading system determines whether one's academic performance is deteriorating or improving. The attitude, behaviour and commitment will also determine the success or improvement in one's GPA as they proceed with their university studies (Eyler et al., 2001). Students who have challenged themselves in the past by taking part in solving real-world problems may have a better understanding of what they want for the future than those who are fresh from high school (Yorio and Ye, 2012). This is where national service comes in handy as the program exposes students to real-world problems through community services and other forms of experiential learning processes. This aspect motivates the students to commit to their studies and consequently maintain a higher GPA.

According to Youniss et al. (1997), maintaining high grades at the university is not an easy task unless innate intelligence is integrated with personal development and behavioural maturity. Starting with a lower GPA might be disastrous because raising it later; mostly when

the choice of the course was wrong might not be easy (Moely and Ilustre, 2011; and Eyler et al., 2001). Behavioural maturity improves a student's level of discipline, which is a fundamental behavioural element in achieving academic success. Disciplined students are likely to perform higher because they obey the instruction and commit themselves to ensure the goals set are achieved within the right time (Youniss et al., 1997). One of the critical things instilled in the post-high school individuals during the national service program is discipline and adherence to the rule of law. Transferring such positive behavioural element to the university studies will positively reflect on their GPA performance (Conway et al., 2009; and Kuh et al., 2008). Starting with a good GPA motivates the students to work harder as they move forward with their studies and subsequent career development.

Eyler et al. (2001) explain that a good GPA opens up opportunities for students in various ways while in the university and even after graduating because it shows how good the student understands the degree or diploma programme. It provides a broad indication of the student's overall grades and scores in various courses within the major programme (Yorio and Ye, 2012). When opportunities such as scholarship, joining an organisation or club, extra-curricular activities, and post-graduate programmes come, the GPA of the student will determine whether they benefit from those opportunities (Eyler et al., 2001). Students who attended the national service have a better understanding of these elements, which inform their decision making, discipline and commitment to the degree or diploma programmes they pursue at the university level (Moely and Ilustre, 2011; and Conway et al., 2009). Thus, Youniss et al. (1997) assert that students with experiential skills and behavioural maturity will strive to achieve a higher GPA to open more opportunities for them within the campus and in their future career development.

Finally, a sense of commitment acquired during their service could influence students to aim for a higher GPA. Students develop this quality in addition to a positive attitude by participating in the national programme. This feeling of commitment, which is shared by all conscripts, motivates them to apply their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the country. Salo (2009) explains that shared commitment encourages them to “work hard, exert their efforts more than officially required, support others and aspire to meet the organizational goals.” These attributes will mould the youths into desirable employees and future leaders in all business sectors of the country. More immediately, the acquisition of the above-mentioned traits will enable students to maintain their focus on their studies, thereby attaining academic excellence in higher education.

Nevertheless, some researchers argue that compulsory national service could negatively affect academic performance. Hubers and Webbink (2015) reveal that several studies report contrasting results pertaining to educational attainment and military conscription. According to the authors, researchers in the UK and Italy suggested that enrollment in the military service markedly lowers educational attainment. In contrast, other scholars studying the effects of national service in Germany, France, and the US discovered that the programme fosters tertiary education among conscripts, which could be then explained in terms of draft avoidance. In this context, the temporary service exemption granted to UAE students who sign up for higher education and attain more than 90 percent is a sound strategy that will motivate the Emirati youths to strive for academic excellence and consequently, for higher GPAs.

3.2.2 Moral Code of Students

The national service programme directly addresses the morality of the learners in its objectives by teaching the students about the national values, religious principles, voluntarism and patriotism (Lim 2018). The initiative is designed to develop patience, resilience, modesty

and a strong work ethic among the learners. Furthermore, learners will have an opportunity to improve the soft skill needed to succeed in the workplace. If the program runs successfully, it will produce youth with a positive orientation towards society and create a morally upright society (Barany, 2018). Social evils like corruption are triggered by human greed fanned by a lack of capacity to delay gratification. Most of the social evils are acquired through imitation. If the government proposes to have an ethical society, then Eisenberg et al. (2016) posit that the national service program is a step in the right direction. National service trainees are known to undergo rigorous training that prepares young people for the eventualities of life. In this regard, the country can succeed in instilling the societal moral code among the youth.

However, the socialisation of society towards morality is a function of multiple institutions in society. The success of the national service program towards this goal will diminish if other social institutions fail to collaborate with the government. The family is considered the most critical institution in the creation of values in an individual (Daleure et al., 2015). The national service program must, therefore, recognise the role of the family in raising balanced individuals. The national service program targets youth aged between 18 and 30 years but psychologist claim that values and attitudes are formed much earlier in life. Parents spend much of the formative years with children and significantly contribute to the lifelong value formation (Nikoogoftar and Seghatoleslam, 2015). While pursuing positive value formation in children, social institutions must exercise caution not to subject them to radicalisation or indoctrination (Al-Zo'by and Başkan, 2015). In this regard, society must provide children with the privilege to obtain a balanced understanding of the society in a friendly environment.

Moral development among university students is of the highest interest not only among the key stakeholders but also among the researchers. According to Boss (1994), college and university educations are fundamental because they transform a person into an intelligent being

that can actively participate in national development. Therefore, moral codes are relevant and should be shaped before joining higher learning institutions. According to Opazo et al. (2014), moral codes and ethical standards influence the outcomes and actions based on personal and professional development. It influences the way professionals respond to challenges and issues within their environment. As a result, Boss (1994) argues that ethical standards and moral codes should be encouraged immediately after high school graduations to create resources and morally upright young people who can effectively take part in the national development.

During the national service, post-high school individuals are exposed to the governing laws of the country, moral codes and ethical standards accepted by the society as defined within the legal, political and social frameworks (Gish and Markham, 2013). According to Boss (1994), as they engage in experiential learning, they practice and apply the required moral codes in completing their tasks during the services. Thus, Gish and Markham (2013) argue that ethical standards learnt during the service act as a prerequisite to discipline and morality during their stay in universities and afterwards, as they proceed to professional workplace environments. The service instils a positive attitude and high levels of morality in individuals as they pursue skilled professional learning in colleges and universities with a commitment to make professionally driven positive changes in the communities (Hopkins, 2007).

According to the study by Boss (1994), ethical practices and moral codes learnt before joining higher learning institutions increase the level of moral development among students in colleges and universities. Apart from memorising the materials on moral reasoning and philosophies learnt in class, students can also memorise and apply the moral codes learnt and instilled in them during the services. The moral and ethical skills gained during experiential education at the national service have more weight in shaping the moral behaviour of individuals as throughout their stay in the university and afterwards (Gish and Markham, 2013).

While college and university seem to be the right place for moral development, a few undergraduate students exhibit high standards of moral reasoning, action and behaviour (Boss, 1994). However, an increase in the number of university and college students who have attended national services will increase the number of students with exceptional skills in moral codes and ethical conducts.

In contrast to the above-mentioned postulations, some researchers offer a different perspective regarding the effect of national service on the moral code of the conscripts. According to a study conducted in Argentina by Navajas, Villalba, Rossi and Vazquez (2019), individuals who participate in compulsory military service are observed to be more aggressive, less tolerant, highly conservative and prone to resolve issues through violence. They could even support political coups in their country when dissatisfied with the current administration. These findings offer a grim prognosis of frequent civil unrest in countries that enforce compulsory national service. However, the leadership in the UAE has designed the national programme to provide unemployed youths with purpose and valuable direction, thereby improving the quality of their lives, strengthening their moral development and transforming them into skilled future commissioned officers who will faithfully serve the Emirates and become considerable assets to the country.

3.2.3 Extra-Curricular Activities

Although there is no direct mention of the place of extra-curricular activities in the training programme, learners may decide on such activities after the completion of their training. College offers an excellent opportunity for students to nurture their talents, and a pre-university training programme is an excellent motivator for young learners (McLaughlin and Durrant, 2017). The national service program training offers learners an opportunity to acquire valuable personal skills away from the limits of the academic system. In this regard, the program has the potential to enhance significantly the internal capacities, including decision-

making, which will inform their participation in clubs and societies as outlets for their self-expression. Extra-curricular activities such as sports and music, expose students to alternative career paths in the entertainment sector (Decety and Cowell, 2014). The program must, therefore, take a keen interest in young recruits and equip them with the necessary skills and competencies to enable them to attain dynamism in the extra-curriculum engagement at college.

During college and university studies, students use both academic and non-academic opportunities to discover and develop their career paths. In general, many people take this term to mean all concentrations should be focussed on studying in the field of choice (Gallant et al., 2010; and Zaff et al., 2003). However, extra-curricular activities such as sports activities, drama, and singing, among others, are potential sources of career development. A college student talented in one or more of these extra-curricular activities can create a more significant profession and career development during the time in college or university. Nevertheless, the critical challenge in this context is that students admitted to colleges from high school directly might not understand the need to engage in extra-curricular activities (Gallant et al., 2010). While little literature is linking, the available data shows that many students do not see the significance of extra-curricular activities when it comes to career development opportunities. Thus, only a small group of students' participants in sports, drama, singing and other forms of performance art are present apart from the regular academic studies (Foreman and Retallick, 2012).

The period spent in college or university by many students is dedicated to preparing students for their post-college years. Thus, academic classes are taken to grow their knowledge in various fields (Gallant et al., 2010). In the process, they neglect other talents. This is contributed to by low personal development and lack of behavioural maturity, especially because fresh high school graduates might have negative perceptions about extra-curricular

activities. As stated by Zaff et al. (2003), undergoing college and university studies is more than just earning credits towards one's degree. One of the critical reasons why countries establish necessary services is to help the post-high school individually to achieve positive personal development and behavioural maturity. According to Foreman and Retallick (2012), students become well-rounded to understand what they need in terms of their career development. Thus, they gain the capacity to explore various opportunities other than academic performance in colleges and universities.

As Lim (2018) explains, during the national service, students are exposed to experiential knowledge essential in improving their understanding of the geopolitical, social and economic aspects of the country. The sound knowledge of the country and its vast opportunities will encourage students to exploit their talents in extra-curricular activities for potential career development. Through the experiential knowledge learnt during the service, students are encouraged to determine what they are passionate about and take part in them during their college studies. Commonly, a good number of college students have become sports personalities and artists after graduating from their colleges and universities. Nevertheless, no evidence directly links the national service to the students' choice of participating in extra-curricular activities (Zaff et al., 2003). The fact that experiential knowledge learnt during the service improves personal development, behavioural maturity, and ability to understand the potential benefits of extra-curricular activities.

According to Geboers et al. (2013), the understanding of the country's geopolitics, society and economy can motivate a student to develop an aspiration of giving back to society. National services allow the students to understand the meaning and importance of giving back to the society through voluntary services, charity works and social works. In this context, students can be encouraged to engage in community services during a time in colleges and

universities (Zaff et al., 2003). In the process, they apply academic knowledge learnt in class to offer community services. Currently, Emirati universities are introducing community services as part of academic programs to encourage students to partake in free community services. Other nations such as the United States have adopted community services at secondary and college levels. Considering the military skills and experiential knowledge learnt during the national service, majority of the NS alumni are likely to be encouraged to engage in extra-curricular activities such as community services, sports, performance art, and voluntary and charity services (Gage and Thapa, 2012). For instance, nursing students use their academic skills to offer voluntary health services to society.

The influence of national service on extra-curricular activities during college and university can be viewed from the improved transition from high school to the university. According to Gage and Thapa (2012), the time taken immediately after high school should be utilised effectively to prepare the students not only in their career development but also in their participants as patriotic citizens in building the nation and posterity. Curricular activities such as sports and community services are a patriotic contribution by individuals to lift the image of their countries locally and internationally. Sports personalities, for example, have been over the years representing their countries in world competitions such as football, Olympic Games, and Commonwealth Games, among others (Geboers et al., 2013). Their success not only earns them money but also reflects on the positive image of the country. Thus, a person who has done national service is more likely to develop a passion of representing their country through extra-curricular activities during and after college studies than those who did not attend the services before joining colleges and universities (Gage and Thapa, 2012; and Geboers et al., 2013).

Extracurricular activities provide people with real-world experiences. However, only those with knowledge about this at hand tend to exploit opportunities to feel the real-world

experience (Gage and Thapa, 2012). National service exposes learners to these opportunities, and thus, they can easily explore them during their college studies. Extra-curricular activities give the students opportunities to have hands-on experience outside the classroom. Therefore, by applying the knowledge learnt in class to complete extra-curricular activities, the students develop better and more relevant skills and professionalism compared to those who did not participate in extra-curricular activities during their college and university studies (Geboers et al., 2013). The passion and willingness to participate in extracurricular activities during higher learning education also improve the students resume, especially in cases where responsible candidates are recruited for jobs (Gage and Thapa, 2012). National service contributes to academic success through extra-curricular activities because it helps students to gain experiential knowledge after high school, and thus prepare them for such activities.

Achievement of real-world experiences after high school and during college and university studies matter in career development. After high school studies, even though students shall have attained the adulthood age, they are still inexperienced about the real issues of the world (Geboers et al., 2013). During the national service, they are exposed to real-world challenges and opportunities through military training and experiential learning. Consequently, they are prepared to deal with challenges they will meet while learning as adults in higher learning institutions. They are more likely to participate in extra-curricular activities as part of their career development. According to Bartkus et al. (2012), extracurricular activities offer excellent opportunities and only students with an understanding of the world will explore their talents and things that they are passionate about. These can include physical sports activities, voluntary works, internship and other services rather than classroom works (Gage and Thapa, 2012). The national service program is believed to be useful in preparing the students to participate in those activities.

3.2.4 Learning Outcomes

Students attain learning outcomes effectively when they are involved in knowledge development. In the national service program, trainers can capture the attention of the learners into critical thinking through transformational learning techniques to achieve the outlined learning outcomes. To accomplish this objective, trainers must expose students to practical life scenario where they can use their sense of touch, smell and feeling to internalise critical concepts (Schoepp and Danaher, 2016). The format of the training takes learners away from the traditional classroom to the field where they learn by seeing, hearing and feeling. Given these circumstances, the program is highly likely to attain a high success on the learning outcomes, including critical thinking, engagement and performance in hands-on projects (Mohammed, 2017).

Throughout the world, governments have revived interest in national services and its influence of education systems and hence competent development of human resources needed in the labour market. Theoretically, there are costs involves and benefits of establishing national services based on the early experiences in other countries such as the United States, Turkey and Russia, to mention a few (Geboers et al., 2013). In the past, many countries had been losing human capital. According to Torun and Tumen (2016), this is because many college and university graduates concentrate much on classroom learnings driven by theoretical knowledge, instead of integrating it with practical and experiential knowledge. Since higher learning education in every country focuses on the development of human capital, universities and colleges are expected to produce well-rounded graduates with academic and practical skills needed to deal with the daily challenges (Pancer et al., 2000).

However, Geboers et al. (2013) argue that a foundation before a person joins a higher learning institution is necessary if the country is serious about developing a robust human capital. During the national services, there are three critical areas of knowledge development.

The first one is training on the necessary military skills to contribute to the protection of the citizens when needed, especially during an invasion or other forms of military unrest (Torun and Tumen, 2016). The second category of knowledge development is to understand the countries geopolitics, social and economic compositions to be patriotic and appreciate citizenship (Valli et al., 2014). The third category of knowledge developed during the national service is the experiential knowledge and skills learnt when completing various tasks to develop personal growth and behavioural maturity (Barany, 2018). In this regard, Torun and Tumen (2016) refer to an alumnus of national service as well-rounded enough to know what they will be studying in college and universities.

The rationale behind the positive influence of national service on learning outcomes in tertiary education is anchored on the ability of the students to make right choices of degree or diploma courses they undertake (Pancer et al., 2000). A person with strong background knowledge about the country, military and practical skills have gained considerable personal and behavioural skills to make the right choice of the degree or diploma course they undertake after that (Valli et al., 2014). According to Welch and Billig (2004), the time taken during the service is enough for an individual to reflect on themselves, establish their potential as well as a career development path. Subsequently, Zaff et al. (2003) note that an individual chooses to pursue a degree or a diploma course in an area of interest and potential, and they are likely to have significant academic outcomes during their four years of study. As observed by Waterman (2014), since a person has developed personal and behavioural understanding during the service period, their higher learning processes will be goal-driven; hence they will tend to work harder to achieve those goals.

The potential influence of national service on positive learning outcomes and academic performance is a crucial indicator of the service's benefits in developing useful human capital

for the country. According to Geboers et al. (2013), national service equips individuals with technical skills and discipline, which is necessary for their civilian life. The aspect of discipline is directly related to positive learning outcomes. Throughout the history, majority of college students who have been successful with their degree or diploma courses have always attained high levels of discipline and humility (Geboers et al., 2013; Waterman, 2014; and Pancer, 2000). In the process, they will abide by the faculty rules and work hard to meet all the course requirements, thereby achieving positive learning outcomes. The discipline among the national service alumni is expected to be higher compared to those who enrolled in higher learning institutions directly after the high school education (Geboers et al., 2013).

Thus, according to service-learning concepts, the national service program provides a framework for young people to serve their country. When people are allowed to serve their country, especially NS alumni, they tend to develop a sense of pride that makes them purposeful and thriving during the higher learning education process. The experience also enables the participants to develop the necessary values to enhance communities (Welch and Billig, 2004). The service provides the new experience, which may also inspire these post-high school people to be more motivated as they engage in the learning processes in colleges and universities. The observation can be explained by the self-determination theory, which suggests that understanding the purpose of an initiative has a critical influence on the engagement and commitment of an individual on the tasks before them (Leal et al., 2013). By understanding the importance of competence in society, the national service program prepares students to apply themselves towards achieving academic success.

The concept of discipline and hard work is attributed to the 12-month duration a person served at the national service (Baranya, 2018); where they serve under strict operations and observation of rules and regulations (Waterman, 2014). The discipline aspect is needed in

the higher learning education to maintain order by obeying regulations. Consequently, a student completes home works and assignments in time, remains consistent in classroom participation, works harder to achieve positive performance and adheres to the exam regulations among other rules applicable within the faculty and the entire institution (Walsh and Black, 2015). The aspect of hard work has a significant influence on positive learning outcomes. Through the spirit of hard work nurtured during the national service, the program is a positive predictor of learning outcomes. According to Valli et al. (2014), students who have inculcated the behaviour of hard work tend to do everything they can and everything they have to ensure that they succeed in their academic performances.

According to Geboers et al. (2013), the existing literature often associates compulsory national service negatively with higher education success. However, Torun and Tumen (2016) observe that abolishment of national service in a country might have a negative influence on the education system and hence, labour market composition. The rationale behind this argument is attributed to Zaff et al. (2003), who argues that learning outcome is the foundation for proper labour resource development. A student who can perform well during learning processes reflects their understanding of the course they undertake and hence a future career and professional development. According to Pancer et al. (2000), through the spirit of hard work and discipline instilled during the service, alumni tend to have a better performance right from their first year. They will probably nurture the culture of hard work and discipline as civilians who are determined to serve their nation (Torun and Tumen, 2016).

On the other hand, national service can also be viewed as a service-learning method, which is essential in promoting learning among students through series of actions and reflections during the one year to facilitate their understanding of the society. This is emphasised by Jacoby (2003), who asserts that students learn what they have gained from their

classrooms to solve issues and practical problems faced by society. Ability to solve real-life problems encourages students to put more effort into learning. The observations are supported by Furco (1996) and Connors et al. (2003), they reflect on their learning experiences as they strive to attain specific objectives on behalf of the community while gaining a deeper understanding of themselves and experiential skills necessary for personal development and behavioural maturity. Furco (1996) argues that mandatory service is a kind of service-learning programs that are established in academic environments with designs that facilitate learning through service provision. Therefore, the service components of the learning are tightly integrated into the study curriculum, and this improves learning processes (Geboers et al., 2013).

Positive learning outcomes can be understood through the concept of transformative learning processes achieved due to personal development and behavioural maturity attained as a result of skills acquired during the national service. This helps the students to apply critical thinking and questioning during academic learning in college. That way, they extensively engage with educators during a classroom presentation. Therefore, it becomes easier for students to develop a critical understanding (Taylor and Cranton, 2012). Through critical reflection, students develop an understanding of challenges and their impact; hence, their achievements are guaranteed (Merriam, 2011). The effectiveness of mandatory service programs in this context is anchored on the fact that positive transformation of personality and behaviour appeal to emotions and deliberate efforts to understand the learning materials at school. According to Deeley (2014), the positive learning outcomes depend on values, structures and perspectives of the institution.

As stated by Christie et al. (2015), the nature of adult learning, especially in colleges and universities depend on natural human communication to change their perception goals and

behaviour towards life. During the technical training and experiential skills gained at national service, the current thoughts are disoriented to change the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of an individual about the world and the society at large (Christie et al., 2015). This is understandable through transformative learning theory that helps and explains the change in the meaning of things in a person's environment based on the changes in structures. As a result, students change their perception about life and what they need in terms of education and the efforts they have to put in order to achieve their goals (Geboers et al., 2013). According to Moely et al. (2002) and Gerstenblatt (2013), such environments prepare students and help them develop a positive attitude towards the education system as they enrol in colleges and universities. This is because what they learn can be applied in society to benefit those who need search services; thus, they feel useful and motivated.

3.2.5 Influences on Self-esteem

Young people are primarily products of peer pressure who use their public reputation by the impressions they create in society. Training of any kind enhances the performance of an individual in society and boosts their self-respect and esteem. The national service is likely to produce an improved sense of self-worth and significantly increase the levels of self-esteem (Taylor, 2014). The interaction platform provided through this program will increase the social capabilities of the youth and enhance their nationalism.

Although the graduates from the national service programs will be free to pursue their careers in fields of their choice, the environment provided by the training program is a perfect space for self-reflection and consequent academic pursuits. Building inherent resiliencies increases the maturity levels of the students and causes them to evaluate their career goals. The program seeks to attain self-understanding among learners and thus rescue them from the peer pressure craze. The program will promote equality among the youth of the country regardless

of their social status, and this increases their self-esteem as valuable members of society (Jones, 2017).

However, some researchers suggest the possibility of a negative correlation between mandatory service and higher self-esteem among attendees. According to Hubers and Webbink (2015), conscription in some European countries like the UK and Italy exerts an adverse effect on academic attainment and earning capacity. Draftees who enter compulsory military service at a crucial age that is, when they are on the brink of enrolling for higher education or when they are searching for employment could suffer from stress, anxiety and depression because they worry about their lower earning potential. Moreover, Kim, Lee and Lim (2015) argue that “soldiers joining the army are mostly in their early 20s, and are psychologically unstable. For young soldiers, uniform orders and instructions would act as considerable pressure and stress due to the limitation of personal desire.” These factors could impact conscripts’ self-ideation and esteem, leading to undesirable outcomes. Such events can be avoided by using the national service to promote mental and physical well-being among youths who enter the programme. The leadership in the UAE designed the country’s mandatory military service such that attendees can enrol in the programme by carefully planning their life and career around the mandatory requirement. The national service also promotes students’ academic attainment by permitting those with more than 90 percent to defer the national service program until they complete their studies. These attractive terms raise the value of the service, thus inculcating a sense of pride and accomplishment among Emirati youths and increasing their self-esteem.

By contrast, Torun and Tumen (2016) explain that students who join higher learning institutions immediately after high schools are vulnerable to personal and social challenges because of poor self-esteem and confidence. They can easily succumb to social and peer pressure, which might divert their attention from the education process in the university or

college (Pancer et al., 2000). This is because they have poor personal and behavioural development and often leads to fluctuation in confidence and self-esteem. Success is unguaranteed to a person who lacks confidence and has low self-esteem. The mandatory service exposes post-high school individuals to real-life challenges and trains them on how to solve the problems using physical and psychological approaches (Deweese, 2012). These individuals develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem in whatever they do. The motivation and morale nurtured during the service can be applied in academic and career development processes (Pancer et al., 2000).

When teenagers are in high school, they are confined in an environment where they least interact with the external. As a result, their perspectives and attitudes are more aligned to things that are less valuable when it comes to geopolitical, social and economic aspects of the society. According to Scott (2012), the attitudes, values and practices of an individual arise from their interaction with others in the society. Therefore, during mandatory service, young people are exposed to the real social context where they systematically interact to develop positive attitudes about citizenship, education and community values. After the service, they may embrace the values of society and need to participate due to improved confidence and self-esteem (Andersen and Taylor, 2008). Social interaction not only shapes the character development of an individual, but it also affects their self-esteem, which significantly contributes to success in education and other things in life.

3.2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review has critically examined the previous studies to develop a knowledge-based foundation regarding the potential influences of NS on the academic development of alumni in higher learning institutions. The variables used in measuring academic development were student's GPA, moral code, extra-curricular activities, learning outcomes and self-esteem. The experiential skills, social interactions and education on national

values are critical factors in decision-making for courses taken in the university. Informed choice of courses significantly contributes to GPA improvement among alumni. The moral codes and standards learnt during the NS programme improve the disciplinary level of students and lead to higher academic development. Experiential skills attained during the NS programme motivate students to engage in extra-curricular activities, which has a significant influence on career choice and development supported by relevant academic development. Experiential skills, improved characters, and attitudes are positive determinants of academic learning outcomes and improvement of confidence and self-esteem.

3.3 The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in research is useful in explaining the fundamental principles that guide the research process. It explains the path that the research study will take, the relationship between the different components of the research, mainly how the finding firmly links to the theoretical constructs of the study (Haugh, 2012). The principal objective of this section is to identify and explain relevant concepts and theories that can be used to support and explain the aim, process and findings of this research. Adom et al. (2018) explain that theories and concepts are vital in stimulating the research through the knowledge extension and provision of direction that motivates inquiry into the research problem. The conceptual framework redefines the purpose and significance of the study. The section includes a set of theories carefully chosen and formulated to help in explaining and understanding the phenomena of the study topic. Theories and theoretical frameworks provide a guideline that will help the researcher to challenge the existing knowledge and develop new lines of knowledge within the bounds and scope of the study assumptions (Haugh, 2012). The theoretical framework provides a structural description depicting the relationships between different variables to support the fundamental concepts of the study.

3.3.1 Review of Relevant Concepts

The theoretical concepts section identifies and reviews variables that influence participation in a national service programme and its influence on the academic performance of a student. The native academic ability and family background may shape the attitudes and beliefs of a student (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2015). However, participation in the mandatory service program allows students to exercise self-sufficiency by determining how those experiences will affect their lives (Noyes et al., 2015). They learn professionalism, which involves both goal and institutional commitment (Hubers and Webbink, 2015). During the NS programme training, they experience character development; enabling them to take responsibility for the outcomes of their actions. They also develop the confidence to engage with their peers and faculty, and they can consequently set and pursue desirable academic goals that will shape their career development. By applying competency-based and experiential skills from the NS programme, a student creates a positive learning environment that gives them the confidence to commit to their studies and achieve higher grades (Kember, 2007). They also integrate themselves into both the learning environment and process, resulting in a positive academic performance at the university level. Therefore, this study is based on the concepts of service-learning programmes to understanding the learning processes at national services and how they reinforce the academic performance of alumni in higher learning institutions.

The concepts of service-learning programmes explain the necessity to create a positive environment to acquire knowledge by involving students in community service programmes (Nadel et al., 2007). Involving youths in community services during national service enables them to develop their character. Students who participate in extra-curricular activities are likely to persist until they graduate from school (Seidman, 2012). However, it is not clear whether tolerance skills transcend beyond the academic field to the workplace. According to Seidman

(2012), it is vital to determine whether exposing students to the society that transcends their narrow environmental reality allows service-learning to inspire humility and personal responsibility. Participation in service programmes enables young people to develop an improved self-concept that can enable them to make informed choices. Service-learning, therefore, exposes students to charity, projects and social change, and enables them to have a higher understanding of the community around them, which influence their career choice (Jagla et al., 2016). The persistence of a student is an essential indicator of their ability to graduate from college (Smart, 2010). For a child to become mature and responsible, they need exposure to other cultures and environments. For service-learning to be effective, it is essential to conduct the process while acknowledging the needs of the local student population (Erickson and Anderson, 1997).

Rusu et al. (2015) conducted an empirical study comprising of 36 participants to determine the influence of the service-learning programme on the attitudes, skills and training of student teachers. The results indicated that community-centred learning programmes enabled the students to develop higher self-efficacy and a positive attitude towards the people living in their various communities. The study demonstrated the importance of relational learning in enabling persons to develop a positive self-image and societal understanding.

Based on the concept of service-learning, the national service programme provides a framework for young people to serve their country (Barany, 2018). By serving their country, Lim (2018) explains that young people develop a sense of pride that makes them purposeful in the learning process and reflects their potential and level of responsibility in the future. The experience also enables the participants to develop the necessary values to enhance communities (Welch and Billig, 2004). The new experience may also inspire young people to be more motivated as they engage in the learning process. The observation can be explained by

the self-determination theory, which suggests that understanding the purpose of an initiative has a critical influence on the engagement and commitment of an individual on the tasks before them (Leal et al., 2013). The national service programme prepares students towards achieving academic success and join careers they aspire for and want to apply in interacting with society in the future.

The concept of creating a favourable environment characterised by warmth and trust motivates individuals to become committed to the course, and this translates to positive service-learning outcomes (Smart, 2010). For young people, the training and social interactions at the national service programme will enable them to understand how their roles connect to the aspirations of the country. The national service program enables students to develop practical communication skills that enhance their learning process (Sankar, 2018). Besides, they have to operate in an environment where they have to meet defined expectations. They learn to create goals and work towards their achievement. The interest of a student has a critical influence on their willingness to engage with peers and teachers in pursuit of positive academic performance (Garzak et al., 2011). Thus, the idea of creating a favourable environment in the service-learning is to instil an intrinsic motivation, which enables students to make the required sacrifices and effort that is required to achieve defined academic goals.

A study on the influence of after-school programmes on the academic performance of students conducted by Grogan et al. (2014), determined that such programmes positively influence the test scores. In the study of 384 students, it was observed that after-school programmes positively affect the academic performance of the students in future education programmes (Grogan et al., 2014). The empirical study demonstrates the importance of implementing effective intervention measures to enable students to participate in the learning process. In an empirical study seeking to evaluate the influence of participation in sporting

activities on the academic performance of a student, Gritmit (2014) noted that 42% of the respondents agreed that the service programme enhanced their time management skills while 49% indicated that they strongly agreed. Out of the participants, 43% of the participants indicated that participating in the sporting programmes enabled them to develop the requisite life skills they needed to achieve positive academic outcomes (Gritmit, 2014).

The concept of a service-learning programme can also be viewed as a kind of experiential learning with a long and extensive history in human's socio-economic contexts. The concept originated from the Cooperative Education Movement of the University of Cincinnati in the early 20th century (Furco, 1996). The service-learning programme was defined as a structured learning experience achieved through the combination of community services with reflective learning through written reports. The service-learning programme relates to the NS programme in many ways in the sense it gives the learners opportunities to develop new skills, perceptions about the world and apply their skills to solve practical problems (Warren, 2012; and Lim, 2018). The reflection aspect of service-learning is essential for students to appreciate the experience they had during the fieldwork and integrate such experience with curriculum-based knowledge (Moely et al., 2002). When students are engaged in service-learning, they get an opportunity of providing essential services to communities with references to the identified needs of the community. In his meta-analysis of service-learning, Warren (2012) argues that students learn more about their social contexts and connect the fundamental aspects of those communities with their coursework. Consequently, students can appreciate what they learn in class and how useful their class knowledge is in terms of solving the needs of the society, which also defines their roles as citizens (Furco, 1996; Moely et al., 2002).

In various instances over the years, there has been significant confusion between service-learning and volunteerism. According to Furco (1996), there is a significant distinction between volunteerism and service-learning in that the latter is a kind of experiential education intended to benefit the society as well as the students who offer the services. While the communities benefit by receiving essential services freely from the service-learners in the national service, the students who offer the services also gain experiential skills that integrate well with their need for academic training in higher institutions after completing the service (Connors et al., 2003). Apart from academic development among students in service-learning, they also gain a sense of citizenship and patriotism. In support, Albertine and Persily (2007) explain that students gain a greater understanding of the society and hence nationhood through service learning, which is an essential aspect of becoming responsible citizens in the future. The service-learning prepares the students to engage in the constructive development of the country using academic knowledge and experiential skills (Furco, 1996; Connors et al., 2003; Warren, 2012).

The concept of the service-learning programme is sometimes used to explain the ideas and objectives of the internship. However, Moely et al. (2012) argue that the two are significantly different in terms of their learning approach. Students who are undertaking internships are the principal beneficiaries of the services because they learn from experts in the field. They interact with experienced professionals in a structured environment that facilitate learning and acquisition of knowledge through practical skills integrated with their course works. In many occasions, internships are part of classroom courses where interns are expected to write reports and submit to their teachers and lecturers after the internship period elapses (Gerstenblatt, 2013). However, during the service-learning, the services provided by the student are also integrated into the course, and they concurrently occur to improve personal experiences

with the societies. In this context, the key objective of the service-learning is to emphasise on the student's learning processes through the provision of essential services to the communities (Gerstenblatt, 2013; and Connors et al., 2003).

The idea of service-learning can also be explained from the concept of pedagogic learning method aimed at promoting learning among students through a series of actions and reflections on the side of the students to the communities. According to Jacoby (2003), students apply what they have learnt in their classrooms to solve issues in communities. The same sentiments are supported by Furco (1996) and Connors et al. (2003). They reflect on their learning experiences as they strive to attain specific objectives on behalf of the community while gaining a deeper understanding of themselves and experiential skills necessary for personal development and behavioural maturity. In response to the issue, Furco (1996) elucidates that service-learning programmes are established in a kind of academic environment with designs that facilitate learning through service provision. In other words, the service components of the learning are tightly integrated into the study curriculum. That way, Moely et al. (2002) and Gerstenblatt (2013) argue that students develop a positive attitude in the education system because what they learn can be applied in the society to benefit those who need search services.

Some of the perfect areas where service-learning becomes more valuable are in public health and community development courses. The service-learning program can be effectively applied among students undertaking courses related to these fields (Furco, 1996). In this case, service-learning programmes are non-linear processes where entry occurs when there is a need to support members of a community. This can be achieved much easier if the college or university in question is in partnership with communities around them. Through communications and close relations with communities, the universities and colleges can

understand the specific needs of the community (Gerstenblatt, 2013; and Ngai, 2006). Thus, during the deployment of students for the service-learning, the universities and colleges can provide the right skills based on their fields of studies. Such relationships, according to Krasny et al. (2009), with the communities can be achieved through various procedural ideas as discussed further.

The first procedural concept is to establish a community-campus partnership, which is beneficial to both students and communities. A formal and positive partnership between the learning institution and community is founded on the principles such as shared values, mission and vision, goals and outcomes (Krasny et al., 2009; Connors et al., 2003; and Moely et al., 2002). Such kind of relationship is achieved through mutual understanding, respect, trust and commitment by both parties. Thus, through a balance of power and influence between community members and the learning institution, as well as equal sharing of resources, creates a conducive environment for service-learning. Through a bi-directional communication between the institution's administrators and the community members, Krasny et al. (2009) posit that service-learning programmes lead to more success because the two sides will agree upon roles and norms of carrying out the activities and processes involved. This enhances a shared credit between students and community members during the service-learning because of mutual understanding and benefits.

According to Albertine and Persily (2007), the second way of achieving successful service-learning is by articulating learner outcomes and competencies. The learner outcomes depict what students are expected to achieve during the service-learning programs. The students' competencies stipulate how well the skills of the students can assist in solving community issues. Thus, specific learning objectives as well as outcomes, in this case, specific objectives and outcomes are established so that as the communities' benefit from the services,

students also gain the intended experiential education (Krasny et al., 2009; and Furco, 1996). In this case, the service-learning programme should be developed, such as that it is possible to be supported by the institution's administrators and community members. This approach is fundamental in a smooth transition from classroom-based curriculum to the community-based learning and teaching models (Connors et al., 2003). The timeline of a given service programme highly depends on the expected outcomes and students' competencies. Gerstenblatt (2013) explains that when students are placed to offer services in areas where they are skilled, their competencies increase and communities are satisfied.

During the service-learning processes, it is essential to expand the potential resources to achieve maximum learning and teaching. This can be done through the selection and inclusion of specific learning resources and materials during an engagement with communities (Connors et al., 2003). These could include resources and materials that give communities voices to improve interactions during the programme. To achieve this objective, Krasny et al. (2009) suggest that course instruction and activities must be developed in conformant with the experiential education needs of the students and service needs of the community. According to Furco (1996), this establishes a method and procedure for service-learning to address the needs and interests of the community and determine the scope of the program in terms of activities. In any methodology and procedure, reflection is always included to assist students in making a connection between the service experiences and classroom learning (Gerstenblatt, 2013).

Service-learning is essential in designing and evaluating learning courses as well as the improvement planning based on their relevance to communities. This is achievable through the development and implementation of a multi-tiered relationship approach, which is necessary for assessing the students learning and community interest outcomes (Warren, 2012; and Connors et al., 2003). A program infrastructure should be built so that the service-learning

programme follows the required policies of the learning institution and procedure. That way, students can capture relevant knowledge regarding the interests and needs of the community as well as the support needed from both sides. This leads to the sustainability and maintenance of a sound programme that will prepare students into becoming more responsible and patriotic individuals. Gerstenblatt (2013) and Krasny et al. (2009) observe the effectiveness and possibility of incorporating structural elements that integrate the ideologies and missions of the community to the learning institution.

The idea of the service-learning process incorporates culture and cultural practices of the communities, which contributes significantly to the success of the programme because they help students understand and appreciate the communities. The students should understand the fundamental aspects of the cultural practices and religion of the communities where they will perform service-learning activities beforehand. That way, they can practice cultural humility so that the community members can feel that they appreciate their traditions (Warren, 2012; and Connors et al., 2003). This is a fundamental step towards developing a working and mutually benefiting relationship with the communities. The service-learning programmes should allow the students to conduct a meaningful assessment of culture-related issues and develop effective intervention strategies based on how well they apply their skills to solve real problems (Ngai, 2006; and Krasny et al. 2009). These entail things such as interpersonal relationships, partnership, community development and students' service programmes.

Service-learning programmes provide an opportunity for developing a community-based scholarship. The academic partnerships needed for service learning is an excellent chance for the scholarship program that can benefit the learning institution, the faculty department and the community (Jacoby, 2003; and Furco, 1996). The community-based scholarship encourages the integration of teaching, research, discovery and application of experiential skills in the

knowledge development within the academic department or faculty. This is significant considering that the service-learning has historic grounds on the undergraduate learning where it has always depicted positive influence on the career development of students (Gerstenblatt, 2013; and Moely et al., 2002). These include personal development and behavioural maturity, which lead to leadership development, improvement in communication skills, and understanding diverse racial and cultural contexts with the country. According to Ngai (2006) and Krasny et al. (2009), these improve personal development and act as a prerequisite for citizenship and patriotism. The ability of students to apply class learning skills in solving real-world problems is the key argument behind the service-learning programs established in various countries world over.

It is essential to strike a balance between service and learning processes for the students to gain well-rounded experiences and knowledge. Service-learning intends to achieve a balanced knowledge and personal development in service and learning. When adopting a service-learning programme, the communities and learning institutions involved negotiate to strike a balance between their needs and expectations. However, it is essential to point out that service-learning programs emphasise more on addressing the concerns of the community. This could be linked to an attempt to deviate from the expected partnership between learning institutions and communities. Thus, service-learning should put more emphasis on reciprocating learning. The students are given more space to independently and freely interact with the community during the service provisions by eliminating the role of teacher, faculty and learner in a formal learning environment (Gerstenblatt, 2013).

When undertaking the service-learning programmes, everyone involved becomes a learner because they are exposed to a new environment. While the students are exposed to the community members based on their interests and needs, Gerstenblatt (2013) points out that, the

community members are also exposed to the students' skills and how those skills are applied to assist them in solving their problems. The emphasis of the programme is based on the reflective practices whereby students connect experiential education to the theoretical knowledge gained from them as they develop understanding and appreciation through critical thinking. In the process, the students develop abilities for critical analysis, synthetic approach, evaluation and vivid explanation (Connors et al., 2003; and Moely et al., 2002). This reduces the likelihood of making mistakes or acting in the wrong way with regards to the knowledge and experiential applications. This approach and strategy place a greater emphasis on the developing skills for citizenship and patriotism as well as gaining valuable social change perspectives through personal development and behavioural maturity.

As elicited by Albertine and Persily (2007), through service-learning education model, students are prepared to undertake their future roles in national development and professionalism in a broader social setting. These aspects define the service-learning as a kind of teaching and learning strategy whose principal objective is to integrate the evocative community services with the classroom knowledge and reflective abilities (Albertine and Persily, 2007; and Gerstenblatt, 2013). The move strengthens experiences gained; teach students the necessity of civic activities, and improving communities. Nevertheless, several characteristics must be common in the service-learning programs in order to strike the necessary balance between service provision and learning processes. Warren (2012) explicitly stated that the service-learning characteristics define the role and interest of faculty department and students, as well as the role, interest and expectations of the communities involved in the service-learning programmes. According to Gerstenblatt (2013), understanding of these aspects is significant in establishing a mutually beneficial environment that enhances students' experiential education while enriching communities by offering valuable services.

According to Warren (2012), one of the characteristics is that service-learning should be positive and exhibit significant and real benefits to both the community and students. While the community gains from the hands-on skills offered by the students during the service provision, the students learn to apply curriculum-based knowledge to solve real-world problems. Service-learning also involves cooperation rather than competition (Connors et al., 2003; Moely et al., 2002; and Furco, 1996). Therefore, partners involved must work together to realise the more significant achievements for both sides. Another critical attribute of the program is that it must be developed and planned in such a way that the people involved can address complex issues in diverse social settings rather than trying to solve simplified and isolated problems (Albertine and Persily, 2007). The approach creates a space that responds to academic challenges through research and development of knowledge.

Another characteristic of a service-learning programme as a concept is that it includes a component of reflection. This aspect will significantly assist students to critically analyse and synthesise both theoretical and practical knowledge to develop an understanding of their career paths (Gerstenblatt, 2013). The service-learning should provide a more significant opportunity for the students and community members to engage in problem-solving activities. The participants are required to gain knowledge and skills to respond and solve specific challenges during the programme. Due to the dynamic and complex nature of the problems, students are exposed to enormous challenges. Albertine and Persily (2007) note that such students develop real problem-solving skills rather than drawing generalised and abstract conclusions based on the theoretical learning activities in the classroom.

3.3.2 The Theoretical Framework of this Research

Four relevant theories have been drawn together to formulate the theoretical framework for this study to help in explaining and understanding the phenomena of national service

programme and the way it influences the academic performance of alumni when they join higher learning institutions. The theories will also help in explaining the research problem from the context of our study objectives. The four theories drawn to formulate the theoretical framework for this study are experiential learning theory, symbolic interactionism, transformative learning and social learning theory. They will guide and provide the meaning to the study topic and research objectives. The theories provide clear and verifiable ideas and concepts regarding the selection of information to include in the study.

3.3.2.1 Experiential learning theory

Experiential learning theory (ELT) was developed by Kolb (1984) to provide a holistic model to be adopted in the learning process and to create a multilinear framework for adult development in a manner consistent to our understanding about the way people learn things and develop. The theory explains the learning process through experience and perception of change as well as cognitive and behavioural changes. The name experiential learning was coined to emphasise that the model offers a different approach to learning compared to other models (Kolb, 2014). In this context, Kolb defines learning as a process in which knowledge is created and developed through the transformation of the learner's experience. Therefore, constructive knowledge is a product of understanding new ideas and transformation through experience. The theory is the most important one in understanding how the UAE national service programme provides a platform for learning processes by creating a multilinear framework for earning experiential skills and contribute in adult development through positive attitudes and behavioural maturity.

The theory proposes that experiences determine the capacity to master critical concepts and values. The theory observes that individuals can be motivated by their experiences (Kolb, 2014). As a result, they believe that learning is a consequence of meaningful experiences that

transform an individual's understanding of values and concepts (Woller, 2008). The observation suggests the importance of facilitating the learning process as opposed to enforcing. Moreover, the theory supports the need for a programme that allows learners to develop critical values and principles as opposed to merely telling them how they should act. The theory also promotes the adoption of a positive learning environment that motivates people to seek personal growth and development, which according to Barany (2018), is among the fundamental goals of the UAE national service programme for young people.

The scrutiny of the ELT model depicts the notion that learning needs abilities that are opposites (Kolb 2014), and that the student involved must make continuous choices with the set of learning abilities they will use in a specific learning condition. When acquiring experience, some learners perceive new information by experiencing both tangible and felt characteristics of the world by depending on senses and submerging themselves in the reality of the world. On the other hand, some learners acquire knowledge and experience by perceiving and grasping new information through the symbolic depiction of abstract conceptualisation (Kolb, 1984). These include thinking about something analysing. It may also involve systematic planning to achieve the learning objectives. At the same time, some learners undergo experiential and knowledge-based transforming and processing experience by carefully watching others who are also involved in the learning. All these aspects of learning can be achieved through the national service programme because of the conducive environment it offers.

Stakeholders can understand the influence of the national service program by examining ELT and its explanation of factors that shape human behaviour, self-image and attitudes. The ELT model allows learners to acquire information by interacting with others in their environment (Beck and Kosnik, 2006). The view advocates a shift from knowledge-acquisition

to knowledge construction through experience (Mathews, 1998). The theory also supports the learning process that encourages practical learning, which values the learner-centred approach for the development of young people (Geelan, 2006). The theory supports the design and implementation of a programme that encourages learners to focus on the cognitive acquisition of knowledge through experience. As explained in the experiential learning cycle in the following figure, students at the national service attain experiential skills and behavioural maturity through reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation to achieve a concrete experience that informs behavioural maturity.

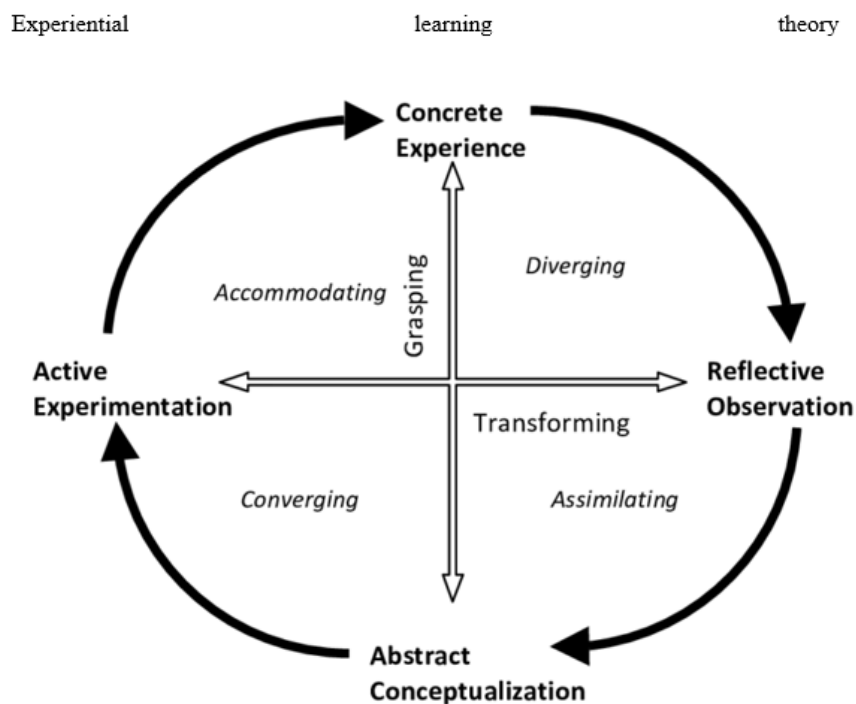


Figure 3.01: Experiential learning cycle model

3.3.2.2 Symbolic Interactionism

In his work on Symbolic Interactionism, Ervin Goffman indicated that regular interactions influence self-conceptualisation (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003). Consequently, it assumes that actions and beliefs are dependent on the symbolic interaction, which evaluates an individual and the society, developed from the interactionism approach that

was implemented in the Chicago School. W.I Thomas, who relied on the philosophical tradition of James and Cooley, inspired the first approach (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003). The approach sought to relate attitudes to the values inherent in society.

The second approach borrowed from G. H Mead's theories of the self and formed the basis for developing symbolic interactionism that focuses on meanings that others provide (Herman, 2003). Ervin Goffman contributed to the development of the components that determine symbolic interactionism (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003). At Iowa University, an alternative approach developed at the time was positivistic. However, many people in society do not hold this view. Goffman argued that human beings are inherently predisposed to avoid institutional control. However, they rely on the fundamental values that are present in their societies to influence their actions and social selves (Furseth, 2016). The active engagement of people in shaping learner's character explains the differences that may be observed between participants in a similar programme.

In his view, Goffman recognised that the attitudes, values and practices of an individual arise from their interaction with others in society. They may embrace the values that others hold in their environment, or they may opt to engage in self-determination by creating their own (Andersen and Taylor, 2008). The national youth service programme provides a platform for social interaction similar to what the symbolic interactionists depict in explaining this theory. The theory highlights the role of social interaction in shaping the character development of an individual. However, the most compelling argument provided by Goffman that has a specific application in this study refers to the influence of institutional structure on the self-image of an individual (Scott, 2012). He noted that an individual might replace their view of self with the institutional views that they hold (Elliott and Turner, 2001).

Based on the research conducted on the topic by Carter and Fuller (2015), symbolic interactionism is a theoretical concept in the field of sociology, which explains the how of society is developed and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals in the society. Individuals often learn from themselves through continuous interactions with each other based on gestures and symbols that are interpreted on the ground of common understanding (Denzin, 2016). The theoretical concept emerged in the field of sociology during the mid-20th century and was influenced by various schools of thoughts and philosophies. Generally, it was influenced by one of the American philosophers called George Herbert Mead in 1934 as he was trying to develop the concept of self and society (Carter and Fuller, 2015). According to the concepts developed by Aldiabat and Navenec (2011) on the same subject, the idea of symbolic interactionism was developed as a response to other schools of thought, which viewed the social structure in a top-down approach where individuals' actions are constrained to authority rather than a bi-directional of interaction and communication.

Gestures, as used in the symbolic interactionism, are referred to as the actions of one person resulting in responses of another person. This requires a generalised perception that enhances understanding of social expectations. That way, an individual can guess the reactions of others. The central aspect to the gestures in the context of symbolic interactionism is the concept that people use language and other significant symbols during communication processes to learn, exchange ideas and achieve mutual benefits in the process. Instead of addressing the way traditional social institutions define and influence individuals, the concept of symbolic interactionism change the attention to focus on the interpretation of the subjective outlooks and the way individuals understand their worlds from unique perspectives (Aldiabat and Navenec, 2011). The fundamental tenets of symbolic interactionism can be understood in four-fold definitive elements.

The first element states that the actions of people are influenced by the meaning that objects present. The object in this context can be individuals or things within the person's environment. These objects often react based on the interests and motives they expect to achieve from their environment. According to Aldiabat and Navenec (2011), this also depends on the social norms and practices in a given context such that to coexist, a person as to respond positively to such actions and reactions. The response of an individual towards the meaning presented by an object defines the kind of relationship the person will have with the object, aspects and people related to it (Stryker, 2008; and Aksan et al., 2009). This tenet of symbolic interactionism is essential in understanding the influence of national service on the alumni ready to join colleges and universities in terms of how the service disorient the perceptions and attitudes of the alumni through interactive learning sessions during the training. During the service program, students are exposed to various social contexts with diverse individuals and objects. They develop experiential education by understanding the behaviour of people and objects in the new environment, and device the best response to enhance positive interactions.

As explained by Carter and Fuller (2015), the second tenet of symbolic interactionism posits that interaction takes place within a specific social and cultural setting where physical and social objects or individuals and situations are defined and classified based on their individual meaning. When the students are confined in the school environment, they have limited knowledge about the social environment out of the school environment. According to the explanation provided by Aksan et al. (2009), it is because most of the time they spend in school with some of them living in boarding schools. Thus, after secondary education, they have little to barely any experiential knowledge when it comes to social interaction and understanding of the prevailing cultures, norms and values of the society. Thus, this second tenet of symbolic interactionism explains how significant the national service is to post-high

school individuals in understanding the prevailing culture and practices through the national service (Carter and Fuller, 2015; Stryker, 2008; and Aksan et al., 2009). This is a prerequisite to achieving citizenship and patriotism needed for national development.

The third tenet of the symbolic interactionism explains that means are developed from interactions among individuals and with the society at large. During the community services, while students are serving at the national service, they provide services to the needy, and in the process, they interact with community members (Carter and Fuller, 2015; Aldiabat and Navenec, 2011). During the interaction, they learn about their social environment. The students also understand details about the cultural practices as well as economic activities of the people. According to Furco (1996), the best way to appreciate national values is by understanding and appreciating the society at large. This can be achieved through the interactions when engaging in community developments by offering services to people. The post-high school students thus get the opportunity to improve their personal development, behavioural maturity and perceptions regarding social and national values.

Carter and Fuller (2015) elucidate that the fourth tenet of the symbolic interactionism asserts that meanings are continuously created and recreated by interpreting the processes of interactions with others. The essence of social development also has much to do with the changes necessary to adjust to the current needs. This is due to the dynamic and complex nature of society with the changing times (Aldiabat and Navenec, 2011). While society might give meaning to particular objects and events during the social learning and application of such knowledge in the academic world, new concepts can be developed that changes personal views and understanding. This is based on new knowledge and technology in the context of social interaction. According to Aksan et al. (2011), this tenet supports the fact that national service

facilitates social interactions that could create and recreate new meanings in the social development and understanding of true nationalism as well as of patriotism.

In conclusion, symbolic interactionism is understood based on the interpretation of symbols, which refer to the context-based and products of social interactions (Stryker, 2008; Carter and Fuller, 2015; and Denzin, 2016). Furthermore, the interaction in this aspect can be viewed as social behaviour constituting of communication whereby one individual reacts to an action or representation of an object, which consequently changes one's behaviour. For individuals to induce a better understanding of their social context, the national service exposes to different environments with different objects and individuals (Aksan et al., 2009). To achieve experiential education, Carter and Fuller (2015) argue that individuals must, therefore, behave in response or in reaction to the people and objects in that new environment. In the process, they change their view and perceptions about the world, leading the transformation of personality and behaviour in line with the expectations.

3.3.2.3 Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory involves the use of disorienting dilemmas to challenge the thought processes. Consequently, it encourages students to use critical thinking and questioning to engage with information. The theory differs from Goffman's approach because it indicates that the institutional environment can force an individual to change by challenging their thought processes (Taylor and Cranton, 2012). Through critical reflection, people develop an understanding of challenges and their influence. The effectiveness of programmes that use this theory is their appeal to emotions and deliberate efforts to highlight multiple points of view. Besides, the effectiveness is dependent on the frame of reference that includes the values, structures and perspectives of the institution (Merriam, 2011). The theory demonstrates that institutions can determine the character and values of their members (Deeley, 2014).

Transformative learning theory is a unique concept that explains adult learning based on the nature of human communication. It uses the disorientation approach to change the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of an individual about the world and the society at large (Christie et al., 2015). The theory in the context of learning is understood as a process utilising erstwhile interpretation to understand a new or revised concept based on the current meaning developed as a result of one's experience in order to provide future guidance. According to Mezirow (1996), transformative learning theory helps in explaining the change in meaning based on the changes in structures and environment of learning. The definitive aspect of the theory explains the reason why national service was established; to help in changing the perceptions of the students about the world (Howie and Bagnall, 2013). During the national service, post-high school individuals are exposed to a different environment that offers meanings to people, objects and practices based on the practical aspects of the society (Mezirow, 1997). This is opposed to the generalised and shared abstract knowledge they have learnt in high-schools.

Transformative learning theory applies effective learning strategy that focuses on learning activities done through task-oriented approaches to solving problems. According to Mezirow (1996), this is opposed to the use of theoretical knowledge to propose constructs for solving problems. The theory promotes learning whereby the student is encouraged to acquire knowledge and skills by determining the cause and effect of relationships. Thus, they learn how to do things practically based on the empirical analysis and discovery of the problems (Howie and Bagnall, 2013). In this regard, the theory supports national service among students as an opportunity that helps them integrate practical knowledge with the classroom learning to make conclusions. Subsequently, students can provide solutions to real-world problems rather than acquiring knowledge based on abstract propositions. The rationale behind the national service

is the ability to provide practical solutions with real benefits based on critical thinking orientation is a laudable approach of preparing young and active individuals to participate in activities in the national development.

Another critical aspect of the transformative learning theory is the communicative learning approach. In this context, the learning processes include understanding given to the meanings of values, feelings, ideas and moral decisions made by others. According to Mezirow (1996), some of these social, political, cultural, and economic perceptions that should be understood by the learners include justice, love, the meaning of freedom and justice, commitment, labour and the concepts of autonomy and democracy (Christie et al., 2015; and Howie and Bagnall, 2013). These aspects can create a different understanding and restructure the knowledge currently imparted in tertiary education. Regarding the national service programme, learning skills across socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts shape the perceptions and views of students about their society through positive engagement and in-depth understanding (Mezirow, 1997). They are exposed to a new world in which they perceive things and make decisions based on a critical and reflective assessment of the premises before them.

According to Howie and Bagnall (2015), transformative learning theory focuses on adult learning processes through the use and application of disorienting dilemmas to challenge the critical thinking capacity of the student. The aim is to help them develop a strong decision-making capability so that they can choose the best between two better alternatives (Mezirow, 1996; Howie and Bagnall, 2013; and Christie et al., 2015). Critical thinking and questioning issues assist learners in considering the importance of underlying beliefs and assumptions regarding the world around them such as the UAE national values, religious and cultural practices, which are critical aspects of the national service programme. According to Mezirow

(1996), they can question the accuracy of the abstract ideas based on the practical occurrences in their environments in relation to the already acquired knowledge.

3.3.2.4 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is a concept that was first developed by Albert Bandura to assist in explaining learning practices conducted in a social environment (Bandura, 1969). The theory posits that people learn from each other through observation, imitation and modelling. The understanding of the social learning theory is based on its general principles. The first principle of the theory is that people can learn through the observation of behaviour depicted by others in their environment as well as the outcomes of those behaviours (Akers, 2017). During the social learning process, the critical tool of acquiring knowledge is the interaction among individuals and objects involved. According to Bandura (1978), in a new environment, we tend to be sensitive to the behaviour and movement of things around and the result of such actions. Through observation, we learn why things are done in a certain way and the intended goal.

The theory of social learning explains the concept of self-efficacy or personal efficacy, which refers to a person's confidence in their ability to contribute towards the achievement of defined results. Self-efficacy affects each part of the life of an individual (Kielhofner, 2008). It enables an individual to understand the power of influence and to develop self-esteem in their interaction with each other. In the social cognitive theory, Albert Bandura indicated that self-efficacy involves the belief in the ability of an individual to succeed in critical tasks. The theory is supported by a study by Valli et al., (2014) who found that participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities enables students to develop the self-efficacy. The national service training is aimed at developing the confidence of individuals by helping them to understand the socio-economic aspects of their country (Barany, 2018); and what they can do to improve the society.

Similarly, the social learning theory notes that people learn from their interactions and engagements with other members of society. The self-concept theory focuses on how individuals perceive and interpret the experience of the various outcomes in their lives (Wylie, 1900). The theory focuses on how people consider events and their role in shaping their actions and attitudes (Stremba and Bisson, 2009).

Another principle that explains this concept is that learning can take place without a change in behaviour. According to social learning theorists, people can learn through observation of things alone (Ormrod, 1999; and Bandura, 1969). In such cases, the learning processes of an individual are not necessarily revealed in their actions. Consistently, learning might occur with or without a change in behaviour. According to Pratt et al. (2010), learning through observation does not need a person to respond to the observed behaviour in many cases. They will understand why certain behaviours are expressed and the expected outcomes of such behaviour. Thus, the learner is in a position of explaining the actions of individuals and practices of people. For instance, a student can learn about the cultural practices of people by observing them perform rites (Bandura, 1969). However, this does not necessarily mean that learners should change their behaviour in order to apprehend others' behaviour. Observing different behaviour, objects, events, and practices during the national service influence perception and thought processes.

The third principle of social learning theory is that cognition plays a significant role in the learning process. Thus, for the last few decades, social learning concept has increasingly applied cognitive approaches to interpret human learning processes (Ormrod, 1999). The behaviour people expressed in this context is influenced by an individual's awareness and expectation of the future reinforcement and possible punishment. The constraints created by the expected aftermath of actions influence people to behave in a specific manner (Ormrod, 1999;

Bandura, 2001; and Pratt et al., 2010). In the context of university learning, for example, students have to behave and act by university regulations. Acting against the rules and values in a society attract negative consequences and vice versa. Thus, having a prior understanding of the expected outcomes, Bandura (1978) elucidates that a person will orient his or her behaviour in a given manner. These expectations and awareness can also drive a person's motive to act in a given way.

According to Bandura (1969), the environment plays a significant role in reinforcing social learning activities. As Bandura explains, individuals are often reinforced when modelling other people's behaviour. He further elucidates that the environment also helps in reinforcing the modelling process in various ways. One of the ways is the use of the model to reinforce an observer. The issue can be explained using a scenario in which a student dresses up in order to fit into a specific group of other students. The student has a higher possibility of being accepted by the group because of the dress. In this case, it is said that the group of students has reinforced the student (Bandura, 1978; and Bandura, 2001). The scenario can help in explaining how the national service program reinforces post-high school individuals who join. A person has to adopt behaviour and manners practised by the NS students in order to be accepted and accommodated.

Bandura (1969) suggests that a third person can also reinforce the observer or a person learning through observation. In this case, the person learning through observation can be modelling someone else's actions. Akers (2017) reinforces the idea by asserting that this role is analogous to that of an excellent class leader whose accomplishment is noticed by the teacher and is praised for modelling actions of other students to reinforce good behaviour. As explained by Bandura (2001), the scenario can be supported by the argument that imitated behaviour can often lead to the reinforcement of consequences. Thus, when we learn and practice specific

behaviour from other people, such behaviour produces satisfactory results due to the reinforcement they have made in our actions. For instance, a student might observe that the extra work of another student leads to outstanding results. According to Pratt et al. (2010), Bandura (1978) and Akers (2017), this motivates the observing student to engage in extra work in order to achieve outstanding performance. Based on this study, the benefits of the NS programme in improving a student's academic performance can motivate the observer to join the programme before seeking admission into the university as a precursor to academic success and career development.

The consequences of modelled behaviour have an indirect influence on the observer's behaviour. This aspect is referred to as the vicarious reinforcement, whereby the model is reinforced to respond, and then the observer exhibits an increase in a similar response. In this context, Bandura (1978) explains the situation by asking a student to watch a film in which a model is used to hit an inflated clown doll. A group of children observed the model as it was being commended for such exceptional action. Without any form of reinforcement, the children started to do the same thing by hitting the doll. Thus, according to Pratt et al. (2010) and Bandura (2001), they were motivated by the praises resulting from the consequences of hitting the clown doll by the model. Positive consequences observed often motivate the observer to engage in the same action or behaviour.

In the contemporary context, social learning theorists assert that reinforcement and punishment indirectly influence learning processes because they are not the primary cause of learning. However, they influence the extent to which people demonstrate a specific behaviour they have learnt from observing another behaviour. The awareness and expectations of the reinforcement processes have a significant influence on the cognitive processes triggered to promote learning processes (Pratt et al., 2010; and Akers, 2017). Thus, attention is the key to

success in social learning processes. Expectations for a given behavioural reinforcement influences the attention given to a particular behaviour. For instance, when a teacher informs the students that what they will study in the next lesson will form a significant part of their next test, they will put more effort to understand the concepts of the study (Bandura, 1969; and Bandura, 2001). However, when they are told that what will be studied in the next lesson will not be in their next test, some student might even fail to attend the class, and those who attend might not pay attention to the teaching.

Modelling is a concept introduced by Albert Bandura in the context of social learning to explain how people learn behaviour. Majority of the behaviour is partially learnt through modelling. Based on the argument developed by Bandura (1978), children can learn aggressive behaviour through models whereby they watch violent movies where a person who has killed is praised for the action. On the other hand, moral thoughts and behaviour are influenced by observing people who practice the same behaviour and act in the same way (Bandura, 1978; and Akers, 2017). For instance, the practise of moral judgment in an individual is influenced by observing moral virtues and the expectations of using moral virtues in making decisions. In this sense, modelling explained by Bandura (1969) helps individuals in learning new behaviour. It also influences the frequency with which a person will exercise the previously learnt behaviour from a social context. Thus, Pratt et al. (2010) explain that modelling of behaviour can also encourage or discourage the previously forbidden behaviour based on the new expectations and awareness of the consequences.

According to Pratt et al. (2010), social learning theory applies the modelling as a strategy to increase the frequency with which the learner exercises similar behaviour. For instance, during observation, a student might see one of his classmates excel in athletic sports. Having developed an interest in the sport, the student might want to try to excel too. According

to Bandura (2001), this can motivate the observer to engage in practice frequently and continue to gain the desired perfection needed to excel in the sport. Thus, the observation that an NS alumnus has better performance in their university education can motivate the observer to join NS and put the expected behaviour into practice to excel in the university in the future. The social learning theory has significant implications, especially for classroom use. Students tend to learn more through observation of other people (Pratt et al., 2010; and Akers, 2017). On the other hand, being aware of the consequences increase the desired behaviour and decrease undesired behaviour.

3.3.3 Theoretical Model

The theoretical framework for this study integrates a wide range of perspectives through the relationships and connections of key variables used in the study and adoption of the theories in learning processes, as shown in figure 3.2. It demonstrates and shows the participation of the national service status. Individuals in the NS alumni categories underwent the training offered in the national service programme. As illustrated by the outlined theories, it is evident that the NS programme adopted the four theories in imparting knowledge to the students. These theories are experiential learning theory, symbolic interaction theory, transformative learning theory and social learning theory.

In terms of experiential learning theory, the NS training adopts a multidimensional learning process to develop experiential skills, perception change and behavioural maturity for adults' development to prepare the young people for higher education and desired career development. The theoretical framework adopts symbolic interaction theory to facilitate the learning process at the NS programme by allowing students to interact with the people from the society to understand the UAE national values, religion and culture. On the other hand, transformative learning theory as adopted in the framework helps in explaining how attending

NS programme will transform the perceptions and attitudes of the learners about the society by attaining experiential skills and behavioural maturity. The social learning theory explains how students learn from one another and the society by observing, imitating and modelling in a way that reshapes their perceptions about the world, call for responsibility and behaviour change. However, before joining higher education learning, the NS alumni have some level of experiential and competency-based skills, which might significantly differ depending on many other factors they were exposed to in the period between secondary school and university learning.

National service is a new environment with stimuli such as experiential and learning skills, which inevitably influences the behaviour and attitudes of the students before joining higher learning institutions (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2015). However, their participation in the service program allows them to exercise their self-efficiency in determining how those experiences will affect their lives (Celio et al., 2015). In their investigation regarding the effects of military conscription on higher education attainment, Hubers and Webbink (2015)'s results show no significant adverse effects. However, the above studies revealed that students learn professionalism, which involves both goal and institutional commitment, which can lead to higher academic performance.

As depicted in figure 3.2 below, there are three categories of variables: independent variables, intervening variable, and dependent variables. The independent is NS programme status, which is a nominal variable defined by 1) NS alumni students to define those who attended the NS programme. The dependent variables are the variables of interest, which measure the outcome of attending NS programme. They are 1) Academic performance, 2) Level of Discipline, 3) Attitudes towards Constructive Feedback and 4) Decision-making capacity.

The intervening variable influences the effects of the independent factor on the list of dependent variables. The intervening variable is 1) Experiential and Competency-based Skills.

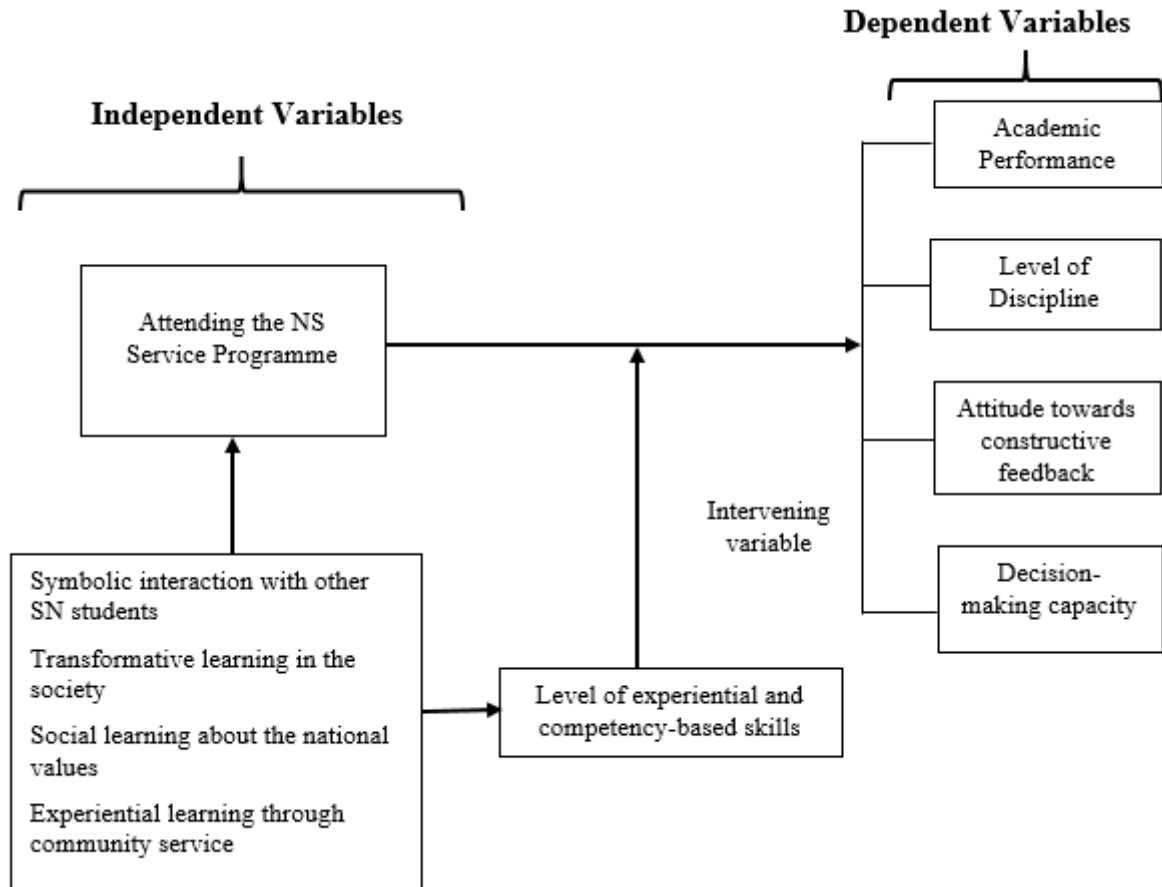


Figure 03.2: Theoretical framework showing the connection between variables and theoretical applications.

3.3.4 Summary of the Theories

The theories used to assist in understanding the fundamental concepts of this study are service-learning programmes, symbolic interactionism, experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and social learning theories. Service-learning programmes create a favourable environment for students to acquire knowledge and apply their knowledge to solve problems by engaging in community services. The theory helps in explaining how the NS programme assists students in acquiring new forms of knowledge through experiential skills, behavioural changes and perceptions about the world. From another perspective,

symbolic interactionism suggests that the pattern and nature of interactions an individual has with the environment and people influence his perception and behavioural patterns. The theory significantly supports the fact that interactions during the NS programme change the perceptions and behavioural patterns of alumni, which subsequently influence their academic performance. Transformative learning theory helps in understanding the influence of NS on academic performance by explaining that transformative learning disorients attitudes, beliefs and behaviour through thought challenge processes to encourage critical thinking among learners. Social learning theory, on the other hand, explains the importance of understanding the social contexts of an individual, which is also part of the mandate of the NS programme.

3.4 Summary of chapter

The chapter included two main subsections: the literature review and theoretical framework. The critical literature review of the previous studies, books and other relevant documents show a positive influence of NS and similar programmes across the world on the academic development of alumni in higher learning institutions based on GPA, moral code, extra-curricular activities, learning outcomes and self-esteem. The critical review of previous studies have shown how programmes that are similar to the UAE's national service have been adopted in many countries to reinforce behavioural and attitude change, commitment to responsibilities and academic development among students in higher learning institutions. The theoretical framework included the conceptual framework of the study, as shown in figure 3.1. The figure is explained further, and theories such as experiential learning theory, symbolic interactionism, social learning theory and social learning theory to support the study concept regarding the influence of the NS programme on the academic development of alumni in higher learning institutions. The theoretical framework depicts the connection between theories, independent variable, dependent variables, and intervening factors to demonstrate the

connection between attending the national service programme. This helps in establishing how different ideas and aspects around the NS programme affect the students' academic development in higher learning education. The theoretical model diagram provides a visual illustrated of the study scope in terms of investigating the relationship and effect of attending the national service programme on academic development among students in the higher learning institutions.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides an elaborate presentation of the methodology adopted for this study. According to Creswell and Clark (2017), research methodology refers to the specific techniques and methods that the researcher adopts in the collection and evaluation of data as well as presenting the evaluated or analysed data. The methodology defines the specific tools that the researcher used to gather information and analyse that information to realise the study purposes and to address the study questions. In this context, questionnaires have been used as the data collection tools to gather information from the study participants. The study adopted a deductive approach to explain the causal relationship between concepts and variable defining the national service and its influence on academic performance and career development. The study has adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting and evaluating data. Data was collected from male university students in their first year of learning who have completed their national services. The data collected was analysed using Cronbach's reliability test, Descriptives, correlation analysis, regression model and qualitative methods using description and critical evaluations. Ethical considerations were included to ensure that the final data meet the ethical and academic standards.

4.1.1 Summary of the Research Aim, Theoretical Framework and Methods

The research aimed to explore the benefits conferred on Emirati students when they attend the national service. The primary hypothesis has three subsections that the researcher attempted to answer through relevant questionnaires and analyses.

Hypothesis 1: Does enrolment in the national service influence the academic performance of alumni at higher learning institutions? Although compulsory military service was discontinued in several countries in the early 21st century, the UAE instituted mandatory national service in

2014 for all Emirati youths below the age of 30 years. Research in this field has generated mixed results, with some studies extolling the benefits of mandatory service, whereas others suggest that such programmes could have adverse outcomes (Hubers and Webbink 2015). Accordingly, this study intends to investigate the influence of the national service on the educational attainments of Emirati youths.

Hypothesis 1a: What are the experiential and learning skills taught during national service that influence students' disciplinary levels and non-academic activities in universities? Arguably, participants in the national service receive specialized training in various fields, which increases their repertoire of experiential and learning skills. The research proposes to discover the impact of these new skills on students' discipline and extra-curricular activities at higher learning institutions.

Hypothesis 1b: How does participation in the national service program affect students' attitudes toward constructive feedback? Students who participate in the national service will receive feedback for their activities as part of the training process. They should learn to accept this procedure with the right attitude to benefit from it and avoid disciplinary action. Therefore, students' attitudes toward constructive feedback are expected to improve during their service, enabling them to build successful careers in future. The researcher proposes to analyse this element to determine the efficacy of constructive feedback.

Hypothesis 1c: To what extent does a candidate's participation in the national service programme influence their ability to make informed decisions on occupational choices? NS attendees are rigorously trained and gradually given responsible positions and leadership roles in the national service. Therefore, the researcher aims to evaluate the ability of alumni to make informed decisions related to occupational choices based on their learning experiences in the national programme.

To achieve these aims, a theoretical framework was developed to define various variables in terms of their relations and influence to guide the analysis of data that was collected from the study participants. Attending the national service programme is the independent variable. When the students attend national service, there are several things that can be explained using various theories and concepts. These include symbolic interactions with other NS students from different backgrounds, transformative learning from other societies they interact with, social learning about the country's values and experiential learning from the tasks they complete through community services. As a result, each student gains a certain level of experiential and competency-based skills, which are measured against students informed decision-making capacity, attitude towards constructive feedback, level of discipline, and academic performance at higher learning institutions. The researcher designed a questionnaire containing 13 items: the first set of five questions assessed students' level of improvement in discipline, commitment to responsibilities and understanding of national values. The second set of five questions collected data regarding the attitude of the students towards constructive feedback, two questions pertained to information about students' decision-making abilities, and the final question gathered data about the academic achievement of the students.

This section also focuses on explaining the methods used in data collection and data analysis. The research method was developed based on the primary research question and the three specific questions. The research questions were developed to guide the study development through the research method design, analysis and evaluation. As shown in table 3.1 below, the questions are answered using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Open-ended questions included in the questionnaire were used to collect qualitative data, while the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire form were used to collect quantitative data. Thematic analysis

was used to evaluate qualitative data while descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression models were used to analyse the quantitative data as presented in the summary table below.

Table 4.01: Research method summary

Questions	Data Type: Qualitative/ Quantitative	Instruments/Source	Data Analysis
Primary - To what extent do national service program influence alumni's academic development during their first year in higher learning institutions?	Qualitative	Open-ended questions in a questionnaire	Thematic analysis
	Quantitative	Closed-ended questionnaires developed in a 5-point Likert Scale.	Cronbach's Alpha test Descriptive statistics Pearson's correlation Linear Regression
Sub-R1 - What are the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influence on a student's disciplinary level and non-academic activities in universities?	Qualitative	Open-ended questions	Thematic analysis
	Quantitative	Closed-ended questions in 5-point Likert scale	Cronbach's Alpha test Descriptive statistics Pearson correlation
Sub-R2 - How does participation in the national service program affect students' attitudes toward constructive feedback?	Qualitative	Open-ended questions	Thematic analysis
	Quantitative	Closed-ended questions in 5-point Likert scale	Cronbach's Alpha test Descriptive statistics Pearson correlation

Sub-R3- To what extent to the candidate's participation in the national service program influences their ability to make informed decisions on occupational choices?	Qualitative	Open-ended questions	Thematic analysis
	Quantitative	Closed-ended question in 5-point Likert scale	Cronbach's Alpha test Descriptive statistics Pearson correlation

4.2 Research Philosophy

This research study applied both deductive and inductive approaches because it uses both quantitative and qualitative data. The deductive philosophy was adopted to explain the link between national service and academic development using statistical analysis, while the inductive approach supported the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. A research strategy is then designed to achieve the research aim and objectives using quantitative and qualitative data. The deductive approach is adopted in this study because research development applies deductive reasoning. In this context, the research starts by reasoning from a specific context to a general context, for example, it starts by predicting that attending national service programme influence academic performance of the alumni in the higher learning institutions: Pearson's correlation and regression to assess the causality and test the prediction. According to Bahari (2010), the study that applies deductive approach used the quantitative data to make general inference based on the prediction made.

A humanistic paradigm would be used in the qualitative phase of the research in the study, to grasp teachers' opinions, awareness and the actual views regarding attitudes of the students who have completed the national program (Miller, 2015). Furthermore, in the quantitative part of the research, a post-positivist paradigm would be used to achieve

scientifically, and common-sense reasoning inferred from the numerical statistical results. It will be able to claim the reason that caused the reached outcomes (Sharp et al., 2011). The philosophy associated with using multiple data to achieve a research aim is pragmatic because it uses an epistemological framework, which embraces the reality of qualitative and quantitative research (Morgan, 2014). Consequently, it seeks to bridge the polarisation between objectivism and relativism (Ma, 2012). Besides, it aims to introduce objective in the research process by providing a framework for normative-evaluation of the information related to the phenomena.

4.3 Research Approach and Design

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data from a questionnaire to achieve the research aims and objectives. The questionnaire form contained two types of questions: closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were designed using Likert-scale points to collect numerical data from the participants. The numerical data were analysed quantitatively using statistical techniques (Creswell, 2014). The open-ended questions were used to collect the views of the participants based on their knowledge and experience about the influence of national service on academic performance among college students. The views were collected as textual data, which was analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The thematic analysis involved the reorganisation of the data into various themes to address the study objectives. On the other hand, quantitative data analysis used in the study were descriptive statistics to analyse demographic data, Cronbach's alpha for reliability; Pearson's correlation to assess the association between attending NS and academic performance and behavioural maturity; and regression model to analyse the influence of NS on academic performance and behavioural maturity (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

The study used both qualitative and quantitative data to understand the phenomena under investigation comprehensively by integrating the quantitative results with the qualitative ones. For the study to provide an accurate and useful evaluation of the influence of the program, it is essential to rely on both numerical and narrative data (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research methodology involves the use of surveys to get close-ended information from the participants. The analysis of the data collected from this process provided an opportunity to understand the prevalence of the UAE national service and its effects on students in higher education. For instance, the test scores demonstrate the performance of selected participants before and after their participation in the program.

Both qualitative and quantitative data provide evidence for understanding the influence of attending national service on academic performance among college students (Creswell and Clark, 2011). The subsequent analysis involves the aggregation of information into thematic categories (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2008). In particular, it was selected because it provides a framework for presenting the diversity of ideas that were gathered during the data collection process in quantitative research. By using both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher achieves breadth and depth while offsetting the inherent weaknesses of each approach. Thematic analysis of the opinions and views about the influence of attending national service on academic performance of college students were compared with the statistical findings to determine the level of consistency and reliability of the overall findings (Creswell and Clark, 2011). The use of multiple data introduces the possibility of triangulation, an approach that enables the researcher to investigate the phenomenon from a vantage point where they can use different methods and techniques. The data from quantitative research would provide a means for addressing the research problem. In contrast, the narrative that would be developed from

qualitative research would enable the researcher to indicate the significance of the study. This will allow for the integration of numerical data and textual data to create a strong conclusion.

The measurable aspects of the data gathered from the study participants were used to build quantitative research. The facts or data which can be exhibited in terms of quantity has been studied by applying this method. The data is assessed using numerical quantity and analysed using inferential and descriptive statistics (Lewis et al., 2015). A quantitative method was employed by the study using inferential statistical tools to analyse the numerically quantified data collected from the research targets.

The qualitative research process is integral in situating this study within the existing literature on the subject. Besides, it is useful in understanding the trends of thought and opinions among the participants based on their knowledge and experience in the field of study (Sutton and Austin, 2015). The study has demonstrated the importance of qualitative research in understanding the influence of participation in the program on the attitudes of the participants. A qualitative approach has played an essential role in providing a useful instrument for understanding the attitudes of participants in the UAE national service program after their involvement. In particular, qualitative research is useful in demonstrating how the behaviour and commitment of a student towards the learning process change because of their participation in the national service program.

4.4 Site selection and sampling

The site selection is influenced by the research questions because the type and nature of the questions asked suggested the relevant target population to answer the questions and where they can be found (Busch et al., 2016; Horvat et al., 2013; Emmel et al., 2013; and Locke et al., 2014). In this study, the research questions suggest that the target population are college students, lecturers in higher learning education and parents of the students. Other factors that

determine the site selection are the relevance of the site to the research focus, showing that higher learning institutions are the most relevant and viable site. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), site selection determines the success of the study in terms of collecting relevance and reliability of data collected. The researcher focused on Emirati universities to reach college students and lecturers and used the students to reach their parents.

The site will ensure that the findings of the study are relevant to the scope of the research questions. Thus, the selected site was set to be Emirati Universities, with the first-year student in a public university with a mixed population of those who participated in the national service program and those who joined without participating in the program. The study focused on large public universities in the UAE that would be used to highlight the relevance of the findings across different learning streams. Data on the participation of students would be collected from the selected university and the directorate in charge of the national service. Also, it was necessary to ensure that the participants come from different departments. The approach will be to determine if participation in the national service program is a determinant of the program chosen by the student and subsequent academic performance by comparing the performance of the national service alumni students.

The sample population comprised of the students, teachers and parents of Emirati universities who understand the influence of the national service program on the alumni. The study incorporated all students from the academic year 2015-16 and 2016-17 of the public university with a total of more than 8001 students, 509 lecturers/teachers and 1410 parents. Additionally, the study targeted the teachers who had dealt with students from both years. Finally, parents of only students who attended the national service are targeted in this research to evaluate the amount of difference in the personality of the students. Because of the large

population of the students, the researcher approached specific students who upon consenting to participate referred to other participants as using the following approach.

Snowball sampling was chosen to recruit participants from the students' population for the study; 1843 students were included in the study. The 150 students recruited upon their consents were requested to recruit at least 20 more students and at least one of their parents or a parent of their classmate they can reach and one teacher. Therefore, each student was given 23 questionnaire forms included the one they would fill, 20 to be distributed to 20 students who agree to participate, 1 for a parent and 1 for a teacher. The target was to collect data from 3150 students, 150 parents and 150 teachers. However, the allowed response rate was above 60% of the target respondents. At the end of data collection, 1843 college students, 106 teachers and 106 parents took part in the study.

Table 4.02: Sample size

Group	Target Sample	Final Sample
Students	3,150	1843
Parents	150	106
Teachers	150	106
Totals		2,055

The questionnaire form was the primary tool for data collection, and it contained both closed-ended questions with 5 points Likert scale for quantitative data and open-ended questions to collect qualitative data. The choice of snowball sampling was useful in reaching as many respondents as possible, considering the difficulty of accessing the participants.

4.5 Data collection process

The process of collecting data started once the research problem was defined, and the research design planned. Based on the decision of which method of data collection was to be

used for research, the study depended on the primary data collected from college students, teachers and parents. Primary data is original in its characteristics in the sense that it was collected from the respondents directly (Lewis, 2015). This was done through questionnaires and was specific to this research project. Primary Data was mainly employed in this research by collecting relevant information from participants categorised as primary data. There were two types of primary data collected, which included quantitative information collected using Likert-scale point questions and qualitative data collected using open-ended questions.

Data gathering is critical in the research process because it enables the researcher to contextualise the theoretical framework (Etikan et al., 2016; and Brown, 2014). The importance of data collection is reinforced by the fact that no amount of thorough data analysis can make up for weak data (Sutton and Austin, 2015; Flick, 2017; De, 2015; and Elgersma, 2017). The data collection process involved stakeholders who were proficient in the phenomena of interest (Adams et al., 2014; and Baran and Jones, 2016). The researcher focused on the knowledge and experience of the participants and their attitudes towards the program (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). The data that is used in the study to understand whether the academic performance of a student is influenced by a mandatory service program (Valli et al., 2014).

4.6 Data Collection and Design

4.6.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument consisting of a series of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather information from key respondents who were students, teachers and parents. The questionnaire tool was chosen because it provided a relatively effective and efficient way of gathering a large amount of data from a large sample size of 2,055 participants (Creswell and Clark, 2017). The data was collected relatively efficiently using a questionnaire because the presence of the researcher was not needed for the participants to complete the questionnaire forms. According to the Creswell and Creswell

(2017), the approach was useful because the large sample size where other methods involving face-to-face interactions and manual data collection was impossible. There were three questionnaire forms designed differently to collect data from college students, teachers and parents. The students' questionnaire contained Likert-scale point questions only to enable the fast and reliable collection of information from their large sample size. The parents' questionnaires also included closed-ended questions designed using Likert-scale points. However, the teachers' questionnaire forms had both Likert-scale point questions and open-ended questions to collect their opinions and views regarding the performance of the students who join the higher learning institution after attending the national service programme. The open-ended questions were included because teachers have relevant knowledge, experience and information about the academic performance of students.

The questionnaire was designed to conduct the study and collect the primary data. Simple questions were designed that could be tested for the relevancy and accuracy of the study objectives and that the respondents could help in achieving the primary objective of the study (Kothari, 2004). Several questions were designed based on the 5 to 7 point Likert Scale with the measurement ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Likert, 1967; and Allen and Seaman, 2007). Questionnaires were designed in such a way to allow for the distribution using a snowball sampling technique. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire tools designed for data collection were assured based on the existing tried and tested questionnaire. The reliability of data and validity of consistency of the data used determined whether the question items were suitable for the analysis. Each item's correlational coefficient was tested against their supposed alpha values if deleted. The questionnaire items that had a low value of Cronbach's alpha and item correlational coefficient values were deleted. A pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted with Cronbach's reliability test to determine whether the tool was

reliable and valid. The Cronbach's alpha test showed that the data collected using the questionnaire instrument was reliable and had logical internal consistency confirming that the questionnaire was a suitable data collection tool.

The questionnaire form was constructed to include both male and female respondents for the parents and teachers questionnaire forms. However, questionnaire forms constructed for the students included males only because they are the ones with the mandatory obligation to attend the NS in the UAE. The research questionnaire was also constructed in a way that the relationship between the variables, namely GPA, Moral codes, extra-curricular activities, learning outcomes, self-esteem and national service in the United Arab Emirates. This research study targets three groups of respondents from whom the data will be collected. The first group includes Emirati university students, and the second group includes educators, while the third group includes parents. The students targeted are those in their first years of study.

4.6.2 Questionnaire Translation into the Arabic Language

The three different questionnaire forms were translated into the Arabic language, which is the local language spoken in the UAE context. The questionnaire translation was a vital component of the study to ensure a high-quality survey is achieved (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004). However, to ensure that the actual information in the questionnaire forms was not lost, the translation was accurate done so that the original meaning of the questions designed in English is not lost. Sufficient time was taken to conduct a procedural translation of the questionnaire forms from English to Arabic language (Khalaila, 2013). The procedures involved forward translation and back translation with the help of a professional translator as well as reconciliation processes before printing and distributing the final versions of the three questionnaires (Weinreb and Sana, 2009). The forward translation involved the process of translating the question from English, which is the research language to the local Arabic

language. The process was conducted with the help of a professional translator. The back-translation was conducted by translating the Arabic language back to the English language to assess congruence of meaning for each responding question with the help of another professional back translator (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004).

The last stage of the process was the translation, which involved the process of comparing the questionnaire forms in the English language to the ones that were back-translated. During the reconciliation process, the researcher highlighted any form of discrepancies and classified them as either minor ones or major ones (Khalaila, 2013; Weinreb and Sana, 2009). The minor discrepancies involved typing and wording errors, while the major ones involved changed the meaning of the question in the local language. During the reconciliation process, the researcher organised a meeting with the two translators: forward translator and back translator to discuss the discrepancies that were identified during the translation process (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004; Khalaila, 2013). The aim was to review and develop reconciled questionnaire forms with the final wording and meaning similar to the original one (Khalaila, 2013). Once the translated questionnaire forms were reconciled, approval on the questionnaires was taken from the National Service department. Once approved, the final copies were converted into an online questionnaire with both English and Arabic text, ready for distribution to the corresponding respondents: male students in higher learning institutions, parents of male students in higher learning institutions and teachers or lecturers in the higher learning institutions of UAE.

4.7 Methods of Data Analysis

There were two methods of data analysis that were adopted to analyse the information collected from the respondents based on the nature of the data. First, statistical methods were used to analyse the numerical data collected through Likert-scale point questions. Second, the

thematic method was used to analyse the textual data collected using open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

4.7.1 Statistical Methods of Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was used to investigate the link between academic performance and determining factors. The analysis also wanted to determine and the link between the experiences of individual students with their test scores. The approach will be integral to achieving the aim and objectives of the study. Besides, the research study highlights the links between factors highlighted in the theoretical framework. An SPSS tool was the statistical software to be used to analyse the statistical data that is captured through quantitative research. A check sheet tracked and verified the statistical analysis of all the identified factors in quantitative research. The statistical analysis highlighted any variation in the determining factors and forecasted outcomes.

The descriptive statistical analysis was used to create vital sum-ups of the sampling, such as age among other demographic information. The descriptive statistical analysis was also employed to cover the distribution of participants based on gender, age bracket and other demographic information. Reliability of the data collected is fundamentally vital due to two key reasons. First, reliable data can be analysed using the chosen statistical tools. Second, the reliability of data determines the results obtained from the study. This should not pose to be a problem as the scales had a positive outcome on the reputed journal papers which had been validated by the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Kothari 2007). National Service program was treated as the independent variable while the academic performance, attitudes towards constructive feedback, informed decision-making were dependent variables. Pearson's correlation was used to assess the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. A regression model was used to analyse the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variables.

4.7.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method used to analyse the qualitative data collected using open-ended questions. The data analysis approach is often applied to sort text data collected using open-ended questions in the questionnaire into themes, summarised and analysed. The research scrutinises the data to identify the common themes based on the patterns of opinions, views and ideas that have emerged repeatedly. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data collected through open-ended questions in the questionnaire form where the data was presented and analysed into themes. The data collected from the questionnaire would provide an elaborate means for understanding the alignment between theoretical principles and the research questions through numerical analysis and presentation and thematic explanation including the age, engagement, grades in courses and attitudes of the students who completed their service in the national service program.

One of the most suitable tools that could have been used to conduct qualitative analysis is NVivo software. It is used in research analysis to organise and analyse qualitative or non-numerical data that is unstructured (Maher et al., 2018). It assists in classifying a junk of unstructured non-numerical data collected from different sources by sorting and arranging the information in the desired manner. NVivo can also be used to examine the relationship among the non-numerical data and develop a combined analysis through searching, linking, shaping and modelling (Zamawe, 2015). However, NVivo was not used in this study due to the following reasons. First, this study used both qualitative and quantitative research strategies, but a large portion of the data collected from study participants was numerical data. Second, the non-numerical data collected using open-ended questions were already categorised and organised into themes (Maher et al., 2018). Therefore, thematic analysis was possible without involving the NVivo tool.

4.7.3 Likert Scale Data Cleaning Process

A Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to determine the influence of lessons acquired during the national service on the willingness and ability of a student to pursue academic excellence. The five-point scale has captured the attitudes of students on the influence of participation in the national service program on the behaviour and performance of the students. Students attend courses which are based on course learning outcomes. The success of a student in these courses contributes heavily towards the strong influence of the national service program in shaping the success of these students in the courses. The course learning outcomes can be evaluated by analysing the assessments delivered to the students regarding how much each assessment is covering the course learning outcomes. These mapping data needs to be collected as well.

The data collection process may be undermined by errors that may affect the integrity of the outcome. Human error in the recording of test scores, school attendance and student information may ruin the quality of the data in the study. Also, the self-serving bias of the researcher may undermine his ability to understand their limitations in participant observation. The failure to situate the behaviour of students within the stage of development in which they are may impair the ability of the researcher to draw accurate conclusions about the target population. To avoid these errors, several steps were taken during the data collection. The respondents were requested to provide honest answers based on their knowledge and experience and were free not to answer the questions they were uncomfortable with or did not know. The reliability and internal consistency of the data based on the pilot test used Cronbach's alpha and indicated that the data had did not have significant errors or bias. A triangulation approach was used to verify the findings with other sources of data from previous studies to support the interpretation of the findings.

Scores from an instrument are considered to be valid and accurate if the points gathered using the questionnaire are found to be internally consistent across all other questions in the questionnaire. Several tests including the Kuder–Richardson split-half test (KR-20, KR-21), a variant of this using the Spearman-Brown formula, and Cronbach alpha can be used to test for internal consistency of the questionnaire (Creswell, 2014). With the test results, the higher the score is, the more reliable the generated scale is considered to be. Convergent and Discriminant Validity tests can also be conducted to measure the validity of the data. Convergent validity measured the degree to which two defined constructs are related theoretically. In contrast, discriminant validity, which is a subtype of construct validity, will test whether the concepts of measurements that are not typically expected to be related are unrelated.

The data verification process comprised of double-entry and proofreading of the data. The researcher entered the data twice before comparing them. Besides, proofreading was used to evaluate the accuracy of the collected data. The new version of SPSS has an add-on feature that enabled the researcher to identify suspicious or invalid data values and variables. It also has an anomaly detection procedure for identifying and checking multivariate analysis. The validity tests would be used to demonstrate patterns and relationships between the determinants of academic performance highlighted in the theoretical framework.

4.8 Trustworthiness

Data triangulation was employed as a qualitative approach for data analysis to determine the validity of the findings of the study with multiple frameworks. The involvement of different participants in the study provides a self-checking mechanism for evaluating the validity of the information that was given by each group (Malamatidou, 2018; and Midgley et al., 2013). The validity and reliability of the conclusions in a study are critical determinants of its efficacy as an academic research project (Wallace and Van, 2012; Newton et al., 2014; Melnyk and

Morrison-Beedy, 2012; Machin and Fayers, 2013; and Babbie, 2016). The researcher also engaged in self-reflection by revealing any potential conflict of interest. The self-disclosure gave the researcher the ability to evaluate the inherent biases and pre-existing knowledge that was expected to influence the information from the study.

The researcher also provided a detailed description of each step of the process. The activity is crucial because it will enable other scholars to replicate the steps of the study to determine the validity of the findings of the study. Peer review was also a challenge based on the assumptions and biases of the researcher. The participants, in particular teachers and the administrators of the national service program, reviewed the findings of the study and shared their insights. The researcher should use both empirical and logical evidence to demonstrate that the scores can be trusted (Taylor, 2013).

English was the preferred mode of data collection because the researcher is familiar with the language. As a result, the instruments of the study have been prepared in English. The instruments were also translated to Arabic for any participant who was not comfortable with English. The language that a researcher employs influences the feedback from the participants (Saris, 2014). The experiences of a researcher living in the UAE mean that no cultural barriers are expected. The researcher is expected to contextualise the information from this study.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Thoughts about ethics are essential for all research projects. The proposed research has conformed to ethical considerations. Data privacy and security during the data collection phase was upheld in its complete form. The participation of the research respondents was voluntary and subject to the legitimate answering of the research questions. All respondents were anticipated to have a clear thought process and subject to privacy protection (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The study considered ethical and legal issues to ensure that the study matches the

standards of academic research. Research involving human participants has the potential to transform the phenomenon under investigation (Block et al., 2013; and Jensen, 2015). The first consideration involves respect for all the persons who are involved in the study (Yip et al., 2016; and Hult and Johnson, 2015).

The researcher, therefore, had the obligation of respecting the autonomy and dignity of all the participants (Guraya et al., 2014; Bryman and Bell, 2015; Siegel and De, 2016; and Miller, 2012). Besides, the researcher intended to demonstrate beneficence, which is the principle of seeking to do no harm and to minimise any potential harm that may befall the participants—besides, the study sort of complying with the principles of individual and social justice. Therefore, participants were requested to provide consent for their participation in the study. They were also informed that they had the right to opt-out of the study at any time without any explanation. They were further informed about the purpose of the study.

Furthermore, anonymity was and will still be an essential factor in the design and implementation of this study. The identity of all the participants will be protected throughout the development of this research study. In particular, the identities of all participants were to be itemised to allow for the analysis of their test scores.

In conclusion, each step of this process will be documented for peer review to determine the validity and verifiability of the findings of the study. In addition, the insights gained from each step will form part of the context for analysing its findings. The data triangulation will provide a self-checking mechanism for identifying the validity of the results.

4.10 Challenges

The nature of this study is expected to create some challenges. For instance, the participation of universities is subject to the approval of their administrative officers. Similarly, the researcher may face difficulties in getting documentary evidence from the administrators of

the national service program. Access to the sites may be subjected to security and ethical considerations that may prolong the time required to gain approval for the data collection process. Since the national program was only initialised recently, the amount of data about its effect on the academic performance of a student may be minimal. As a result, the ability of the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of the influence of the intersection of experiences gained by participating in the program, the changes they cause in the character of an individual and their academic performance may be undermined.

Another major challenge in the study was to get the necessary approvals from the BUiD and National Services department. The topic is considered very sensitive and each and every phase of the research needed approvals from the National service department and the approval process took much time during each phase. An official letter was needed to be sent from the National Service to the university, which covers content that they are aware of the research and what information can be covered in the research.

4.11 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter illustrated the methods and approaches that were used in data collection and analysis. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. For the qualitative methods, open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire form to gather the qualitative data that was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. The data gathered were analysed using the triangulation method and thematic analysis. The approval of human respondents was required before they were included in the study. For the quantitative methods, a questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability and validity of the internal consistency of the quantitative data used to conduct Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation analysis and multiple linear regression model analysis. During the data collection and throughout the research development process, the

researcher adopted ethical considerations such as approval of the topic by the supervisors, seeking the consent of the participants and maintaining the originality of the content through proper citation and developing a list of references used as the sources of information. The critical challenge of adopting the data gathering method was difficulty in accessing the government data about the NS programme.

Chapter 5

Results and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The results and analysis chapter include the presentation and discussions of the analysed qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the three groups of participants: students, teachers or lecturers, and parents. The quantitative data analysis section of results presentations and analysis will be done in five stages: 1) demographic analysis using descriptive statistics, 2) construct reliability test using Cronbach's alpha, 3) correlational analysis using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, and 4) regression analysis. The qualitative data has also been presented regarding the perception of the NS alumni students about the importance of NS in influencing their choice of courses in the university and the processes they followed in choosing their university courses as well as their attitude towards the courses they take at the university level. Apart from the students' data, the data obtained from teachers and parents were also presented and analysed using the same criteria. The results presentations and analysis have been presented in the following sections within the chapter.

5.2 Response Rate

The response rate refers to the number of people who answered the survey questions and returned the forms divided by the total number of people in the sample that were served with the questionnaires multiplied by 100 to get the percentage rate (Creswell and Clark, 2017). There were three groups of participants: college students, lecturers/teachers and parents. The target sample size of the college students was 3150, but out of the number, only 1843 students returned completed survey questions, giving a response rate of 59%. The targeted sample size for parents was 150, but only 106 completed the survey questions, giving a response rate of 71%. The targeted sample size for lecturers/teachers were 150, but again only 106 completed

the survey questions, giving a response rate of 71%. The total targeted sample size from the three groups of participants was 3450. However, the valid responses were 2055, giving the overall response rate to be 60%, which is sufficiently above average (Creswell et al., 2014) and enough for data analysis.

Table 5.0001: Table of target and final sample

Group	Target Sample	Final Sample	Response rate (%)
Students	3,150	1843	59%
Parents	150	106	71%
Teachers	150	106	71%
Totals	3,450	2,055	60%

5.3 Descriptive Analysis of Question Items

The descriptive statistics is one of the two branches of statistics that include techniques used to describe the data collected in order to understand their distribution (Creswell and Clark, 2017). The primary purpose of using descriptive statistics in this study is to provide a brief summary of the samples based on the specific measures used in the study. The approach often includes graphics analysis to form the major component of the quantitative methods of data analysis. Descriptive statistics present a quantitative analysis of the collected data in a simple way for a better understanding before undertaking inferential statistics analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). It is used to break down the entire data into a simple form by describing all the item questions used to conduct inferential statistics analysis later in the chapter. The

approach taken includes frequency distribution and percentages analysis to analyse all question items used to conduct inferential statistics analysis for students', teachers and parents' data.

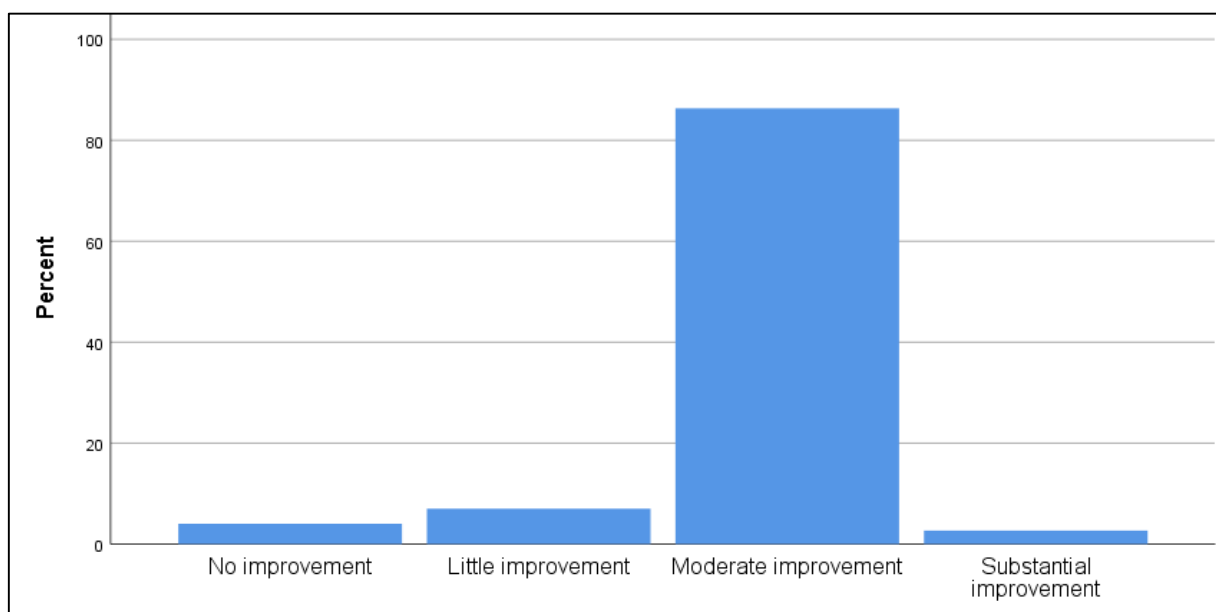
5.3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Student's Question Items

There were 13 item questions developed to collect data that were used to conduct inferential statistics analysis in the latter part of the chapter. The first five question items assessed the student's level of improvement in discipline, commitment to responsibilities and understanding of the national values. The other 5 question items were developed to collect data regarding the attitude of the students towards constructive feedback, 2 question items collected information about students' decision-making abilities. In comparison, the other 1 question item collected information about the academic achievement of the students. The descriptive analysis of these question items included frequency distributions and percentages, as well as bar graphs, which visualised and helped to compare the responses of the participants for each item question. The results were presented using tables and graphical representations, as shown in the following section.

The first question item collected data about the improvement of self-understanding of the college students after attending the NS programme. All the 1843 students responded to the question. From this number, 4.0% ($N = 74$) recorded no improvement in self-understanding, 7.0% ($N = 129$) recorded little improvement after NS, 86.3% ($N = 1591$) recorded moderate improvement in self-understanding after NS, while the remaining 2.7% ($N = 49$) recorded substantial improvement in their self-understanding after attending the NS programme. Majority of the respondents had moderate improvement in self-understanding, which shows that attending NS programme helps in improving the self-understanding of an individual.

Table 5.02: How has your self-understanding improved after NS?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No improvement	74	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Little improvement	129	7.0	7.0	11.0
	Moderate improvement	1591	86.3	86.3	97.3
	Substantial improvement	49	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 05.001: How was your self-understanding improved after NS?**

The second question item collected data about the improvement of the students' understanding of the national values after attending NS. All the 1843 students responded to the question. From this number, 0.6% ($N = 11$) had no improvement in understanding of the Emirati national values after NS, 2.2% ($N = 40$) had little improvement in understanding of the Emirati national values after NS, 5.2% ($N = 96$) had moderate improvement in understanding of the Emirati national values after NS, 89.1% ($N = 1642$) had substantial improvement in

understanding of the Emirati national values after NS, while the remaining 2.9% ($N = 54$) recorded a significant improvement in understanding of the Emirati national values after NS. Majority of the respondents had moderate improvement in understanding of the Emirati national values after NS, which shows attending NS helped the students to understand the national values.

Table 5.03: How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No improvement	11	.6	.6	.6
	Little improvement	40	2.2	2.2	2.8
	Moderate improvement	96	5.2	5.2	8.0
	Substantial improvement	1642	89.1	89.1	97.1
	Major improvement	54	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

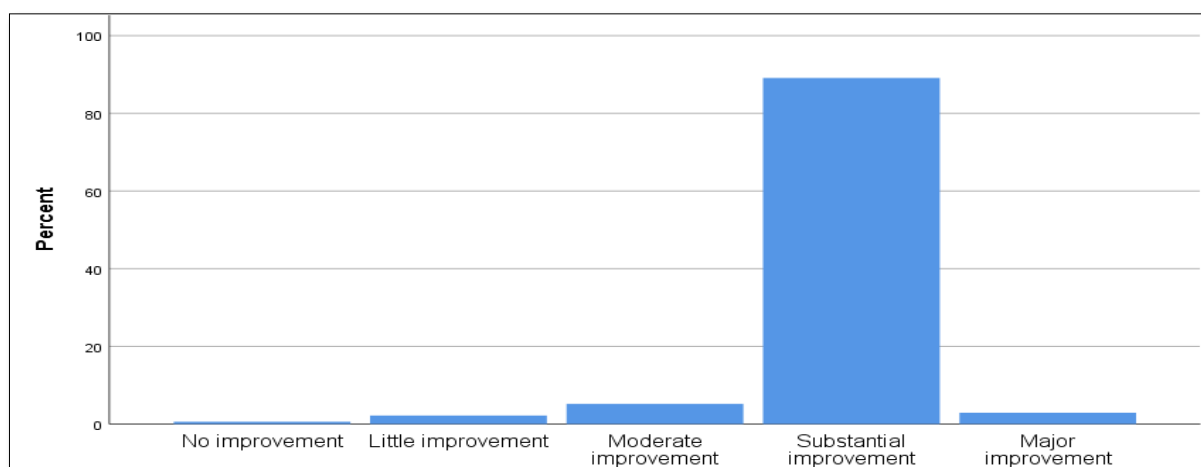


Figure 5.02: How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?

The third question item collected data on the level of improvement in the student's real-world skills after attending the NS programme. The entire sample size of 1843 students responded to this question. Out of the sample, 0.3% ($N = 6$) had no improvement in their real-world skills after attending the NS, 0.9% ($N = 17$) recorded little improvement in their real-world skills after attending the NS, 1.8% ($N = 33$) had moderate improvement in their real-world skills after attending the NS, 93.4% ($N = 1722$) recorded a substantial improvement in

their real-world skills after attending the NS, while the remaining 3.5% ($N = 65$) had a significant improvement in their real-world skills after attending the NS. The higher percentage of the respondents as visualised in the bar graph had substantial improvement in self-understanding after attending NS.

Table 5.004: What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No improvement	6	.3	.3	.3
	Little improvement	17	.9	.9	1.2
	Moderate improvement	33	1.8	1.8	3.0
	Substantial improvement	1722	93.4	93.4	96.5
	Major improvement	65	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

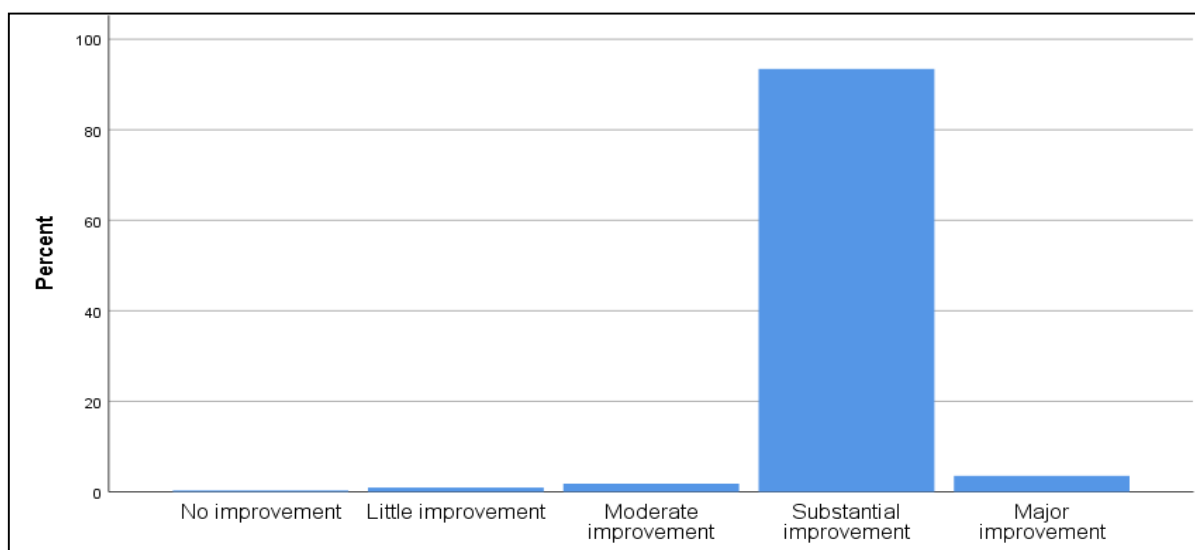


Figure 5.003: What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?

The fourth question item asked the students to state the level of improvement of their responsibility or commitment to their duties. The entire sample size of 1843 students responded to the fourth question. Of this number, 0.4% ($N = 8$) had indicated that they had a poor performance in the level of their responsibilities to their duties after attending NS, 1.8% ($N = 33$) had below-average performance in the level of their responsibilities to their duties after attending NS, 4.6% ($N = 84$) had moderate performance in the level of their responsibilities to

their duties after attending NS, 89.4% ($N = 1647$) recorded above-average performance in the level of their responsibilities to their duties after attending NS, 3.9% ($N = 71$) had an excellent performance the level of their responsibilities to their duties after attending NS. As visualised in the bar graph, the majority of the students had above-average performance in the level of their responsibilities to their duties after attending NS.

Table 5.05: What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor performance	8	.4	.4	.4
	Below average performance	33	1.8	1.8	2.2
	Moderate performance	84	4.6	4.6	6.8
	Above average performance	1647	89.4	89.4	96.1
	Excellent performance	71	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

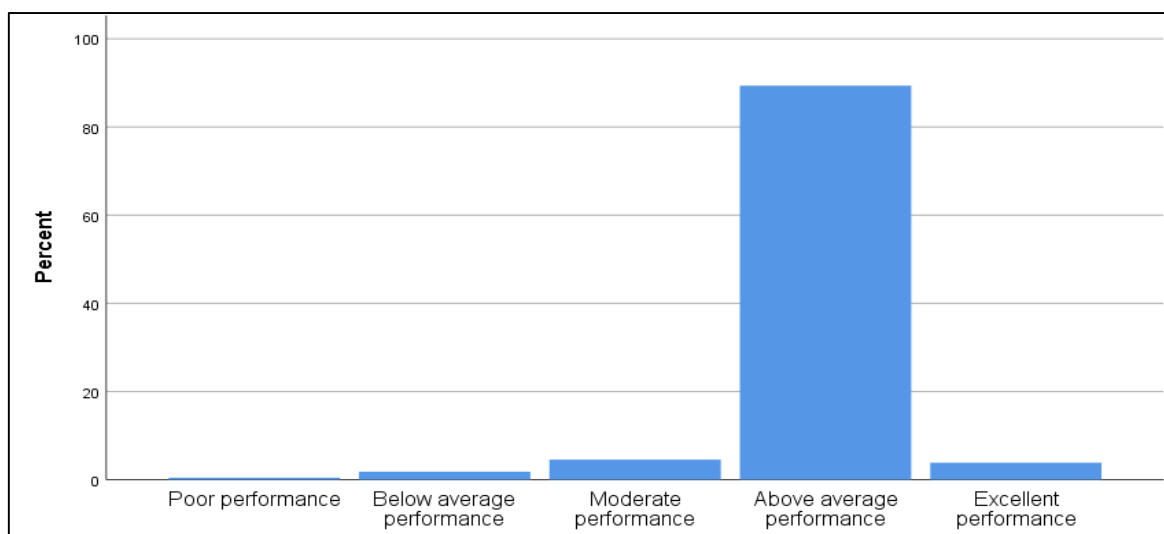


Figure 5.04: What is the level of improvement in your responsibilities to your duties?

The fifth question item asked the students to rate their overall discipline level during their stay in the college or higher education institution. All the 1843 students responded to this question. From the number, 0.7% ($N = 12$) had very low improvement in the discipline level after the NS, 1.0% ($N = 19$) recorded low improvement discipline level after the NS, 2.0% (N

= 36) had moderate improvement in discipline level after the NS, 92.9% ($N = 1712$) recorded a significant improvement in discipline level after the NS, while the remaining 3.5% ($N = 64$) had very significant improvement in discipline level after the NS. Majority of the students highly improved their level of discipline.

Table 5.06: Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low discipline level	12	.7	.7	.7
	Low discipline level	19	1.0	1.0	1.7
	Moderate discipline level	36	2.0	2.0	3.6
	High discipline level	1712	92.9	92.9	96.5
	Very high discipline level	64	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

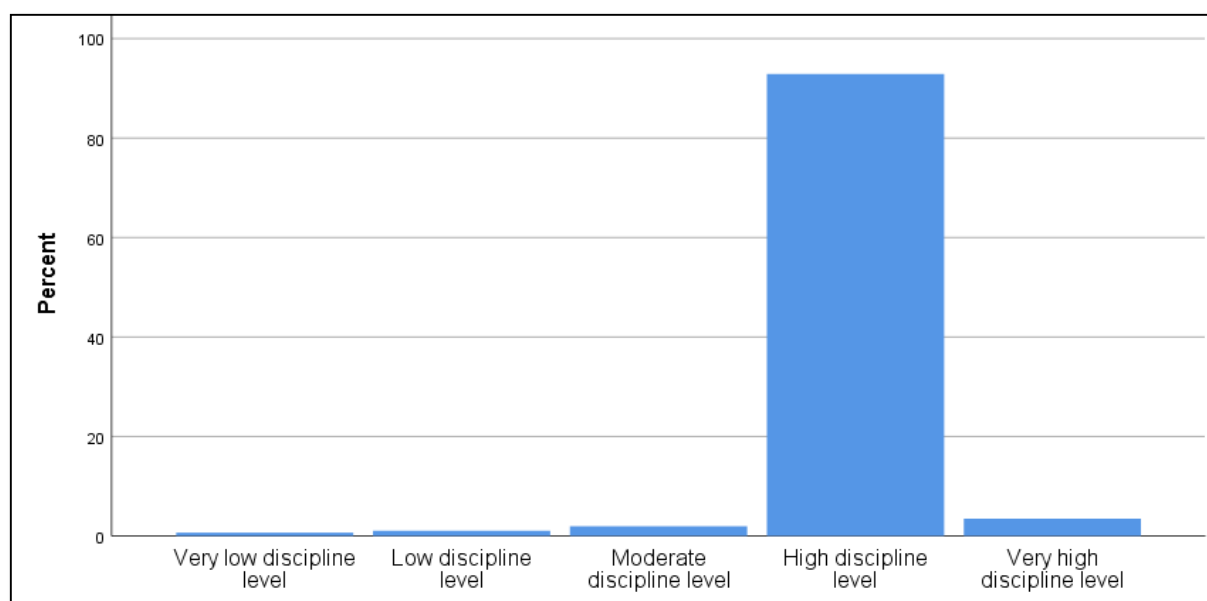


Figure 5.05: Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution

The sixth question item asked the students to state their level of self-confidence in the degree course they are taking at the college/university to assess their attitude towards their higher learning education. The entire study sample of 1843 students responded to this question.

The results showed that 0.5% ($N = 9$) had no self-confidence in the courses they are taking in the higher learning institutions, 1.8% ($N = 34$) recorded low self-confidence in the courses they are taking in the higher learning institutions, 4.5% ($N = 83$) had moderate self-confidence in the courses they are taking in the higher learning institutions, 89.3% ($N = 1646$) had high self-confidence in the courses they are taking in the higher learning institutions, while the remaining 3.9% ($N = 64$) had very high self-confidence in the courses they are taking in the higher learning institutions. From the results, the majority of the students have high self-confidence in the courses they are taking in the higher learning institutions.

Table 5.7: What is your level of self-confidence in the course you are taking at your college or higher education institution?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No self-confidence	9	.5	.5	.5
	Low self-confidence	34	1.8	1.8	2.3
	Moderate self confidence	83	4.5	4.5	6.8
	High self-confidence	1646	89.3	89.3	96.1
	Very high self-confidence	71	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

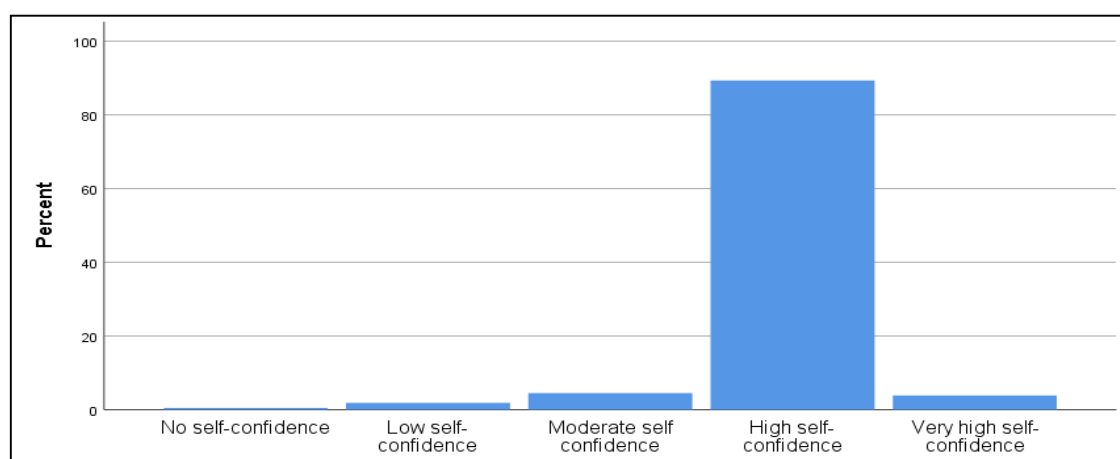


Figure 5.006: What is your level of self-confidence in the course you are taking at your college or higher education institution?

The seventh question item was designed to collect the data about the students' satisfaction with the teaching methods used in classes they take in the higher learning

institutions. All the 1843 students who took part in the study responded to this question item. The results showed that 0.4% ($N = 7$) of the students were highly dissatisfied with the teaching methods for their classes, 1.0% ($N = 18$) of the students were dissatisfied with the teaching methods for their classes, 1.8% ($N = 34$) of the students were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the teaching methods for their classes, 92.5% ($N = 1705$) of the students were satisfied with the teaching methods for their classes, while the remaining 4.3% ($N = 79$) of the students were highly satisfied with the teaching methods for their classes. Majority of the students were satisfied with the teaching methods for their classes as visualised in the following table.

Table 5.8: What is the level of satisfaction with the teaching methods for your classes?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly dissatisfied	7	.4	.4	.4
	Dissatisfied	18	1.0	1.0	1.4
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	34	1.8	1.8	3.2
	Satisfied	1705	92.5	92.5	95.7
	Highly satisfied	79	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

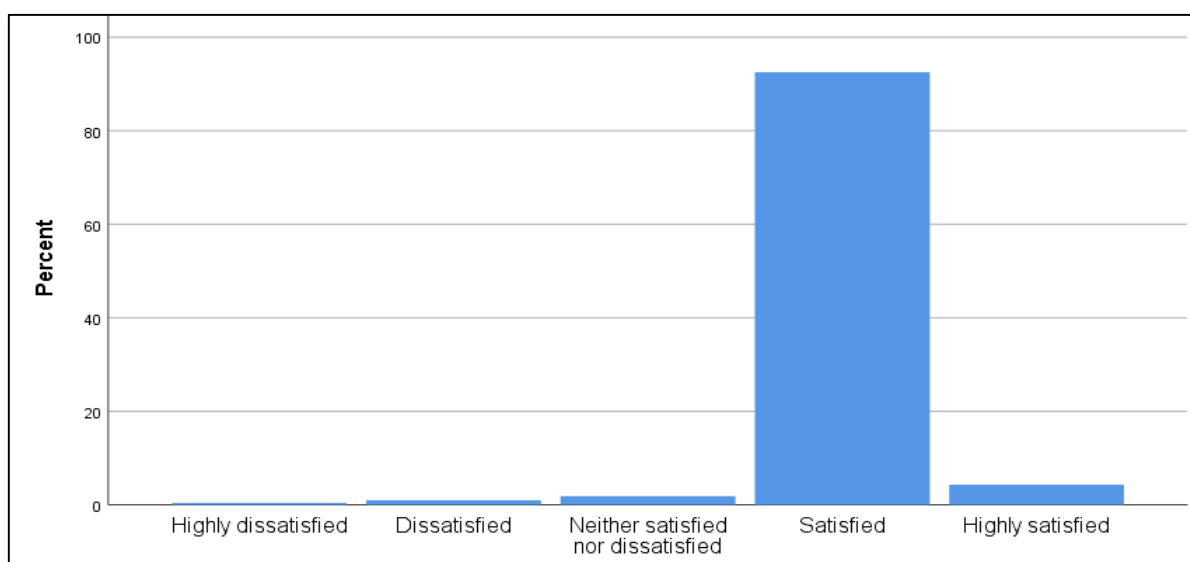


Figure 5.7: What is the level of satisfaction with the teaching methods for your classes?

The eighth question item was developed to collect data about the students' level of satisfaction with the results of the assignments given to them while undertaking their studies in the higher learning institutions. The entire sample size of 1843 students responded to this question item. As demonstrated in the following table and visualised in the bar graph, 0.6% ($N = 11$) of the students were highly dissatisfied with the results of their assignments, 1.1% ($N = 20$) of the students were dissatisfied with the results of their assignments, 2.7% ($N = 49$) of the students were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the results of their assignments, 92.2% ($N = 1699$) of the students were satisfied with the results of their assignments, while the remaining 3.5% ($N = 64$) of the students were highly satisfied with the results of their assignments. Majority of the students were satisfied with the results of their assignments as visualised in the following table.

Table 5.09: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly dissatisfied	11	.6	.6	.6
	Dissatisfied	20	1.1	1.1	1.7
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	49	2.7	2.7	4.3
	Satisfied	1699	92.2	92.2	96.5
	Highly satisfied	64	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

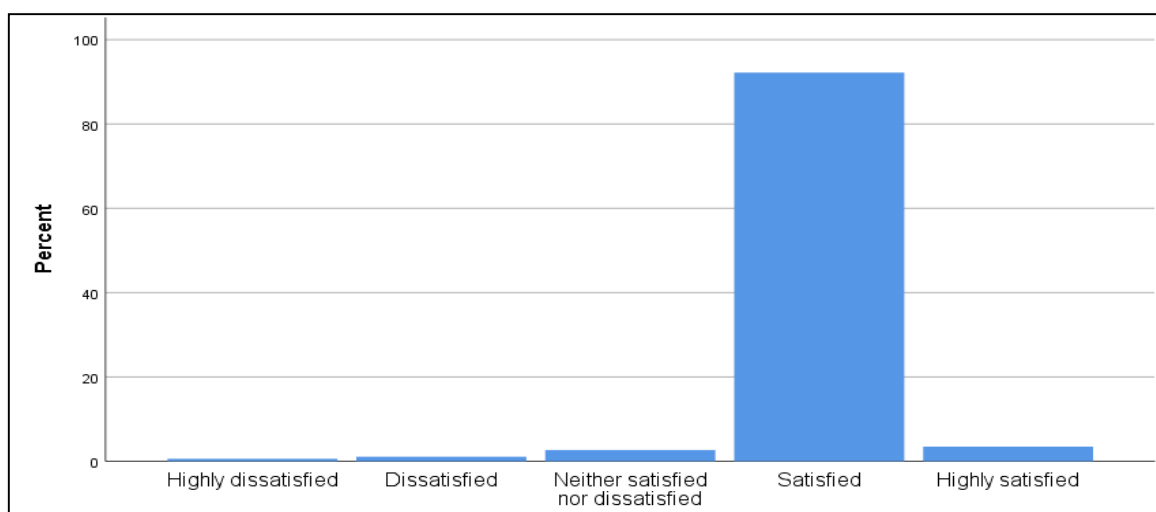


Figure 05.008: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?

The ninth question item was designed to collect data regarding the students' level of satisfaction with the results examinations they take in higher learning education. The entire sample size of 1843 students responded to this question item. The following results show that 0.3% ($N = 6$) of the students were highly dissatisfied with the results of their examinations, 0.9% ($N = 16$) of the students were dissatisfied with the results of their examinations, 1.8% ($N = 33$) of the students were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the results of their examinations, 93.4% ($N = 1722$) of the students were satisfied with the results of their examinations, while 3.6% ($N = 66$) of the students were highly satisfied with the results of their examinations. Majority of the students were satisfied with the results of their examinations.

Table 5.10: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly dissatisfied	6	.3	.3	.3
	Dissatisfied	16	.9	.9	1.2
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	33	1.8	1.8	3.0
	Satisfied	1722	93.4	93.4	96.4
	Highly satisfied	66	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

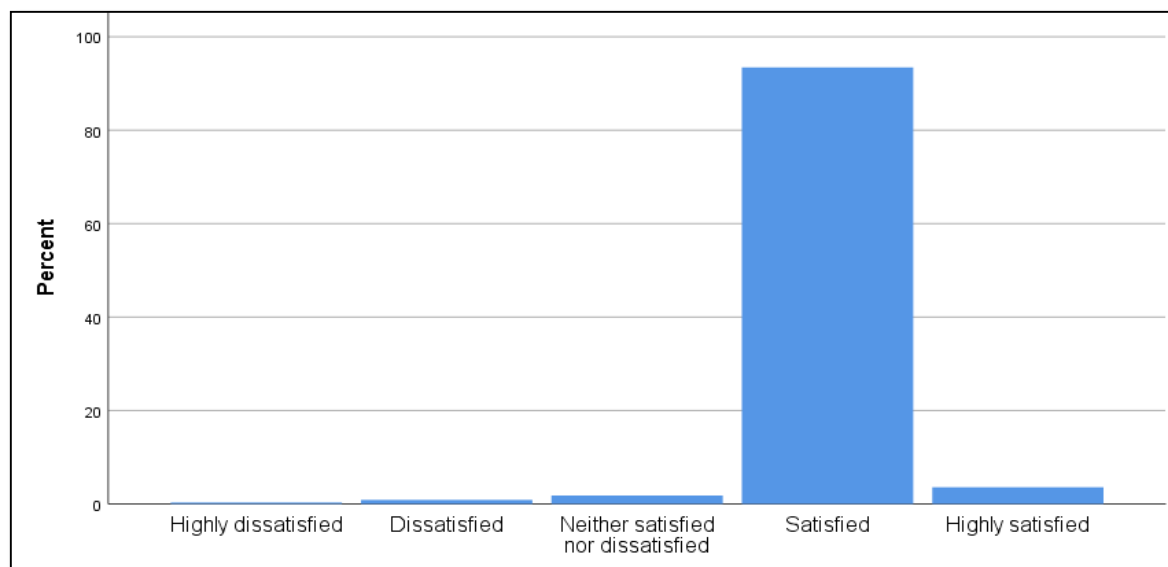
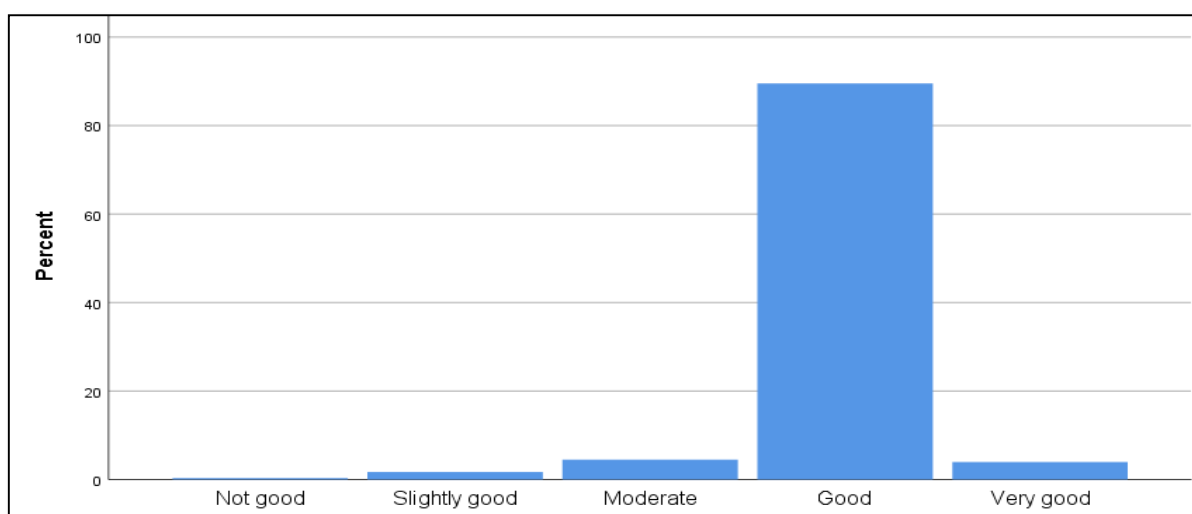


Figure 05.009: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?

The tenth question item was designed to collect data on how well the students balance their academic work with extra-curricular activities. All the students' sample size responded to the question. The results presented below shows that 0.3% ($N = 6$) of the students did not have a good balance between their academic work and extra-curricular activities, 1.7% ($N = 31$) of the students had a slightly good balance between their academic work and extra-curricular activities, 4.5% ($N = 83$) of the students had a reasonable balance between their academic work and extra-curricular activities, 89.5% ($N = 1650$) of the students had a good balance between their academic work and extra-curricular activities, while 4.0% ($N = 73$) of the students had a very good balance between their academic work and extra-curricular activities. Majority of the students had a good balance between their academic work and extra-curricular activities as a result of the NS skills.

Table 05.011: How well do you balance your academic work with extra-curricular activities?

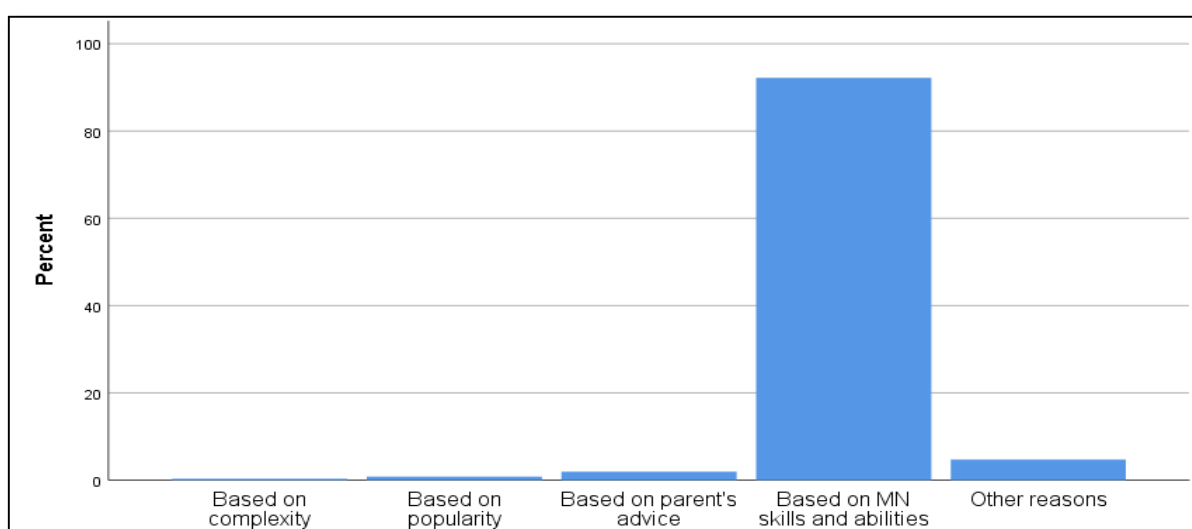
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not good	6	.3	.3	.3
	Slightly good	31	1.7	1.7	2.0
	Moderate	83	4.5	4.5	6.5
	Good	1650	89.5	89.5	96.0
	Very good	73	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 5.0010: How well do you balance your academic work with extra-curricular activities?**

The eleventh question item was used to collect data from students regarding the basis of the foundation of their choice for the courses they are undertaking in the higher learning institution. The entire students' sample size of 1843 responded to the question. From the results, 0.3% ($N = 6$) of the students chose their courses based on the complexity of the course, 0.8% ($N = 15$) of the students made choices based on the popularity of the course, 2.0% ($N = 36$) of the students chose their courses based on parent's advice, 92.2% ($N = 1699$) of the students chose their courses based on their abilities and skills, while 4.7% ($N = 87$) of the students chose their reasons as a result of other reasons. Majority of the students chose their courses based on the abilities and skills they learnt during NS.

Table 5.012: What was the basis of your choice of course?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Based on complexity	6	.3	.3	.3
	Based on popularity	15	.8	.8	1.1
	Based on parent's advice	36	2.0	2.0	3.1
	Based on NS skills and abilities	1699	92.2	92.2	95.3
	Other reasons	87	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 5.011: What was the basis of your choice of course?**

The twelfth question item was designed to collect data regarding the students' satisfaction level with the course they are undertaking at the higher learning institutions, and all participants in this category responded to the question. The results, 0.3% ($N = 6$) of the students highly dissatisfied with the courses they are undertaking at high learning institutions, 0.9% ($N = 16$) of the students were dissatisfied with the courses they are undertaking at high learning institutions, 1.7% ($N = 32$) of the students were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the courses they are undertaking at high learning institutions, 93.6% ($N = 1725$) of the students were satisfied with the courses they are undertaking at high learning institutions, while 3.5%

($N = 64$) of the students were highly satisfied with the courses they are undertaking at high learning institutions.

Table 5.13: What is your level of satisfaction with the course you are undertaking at the college or higher education institution?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly dissatisfied	6	.3	.3	.3
	Dissatisfied	16	.9	.9	1.2
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	32	1.7	1.7	2.9
	Satisfied	1725	93.6	93.6	96.5
	Highly satisfied	64	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

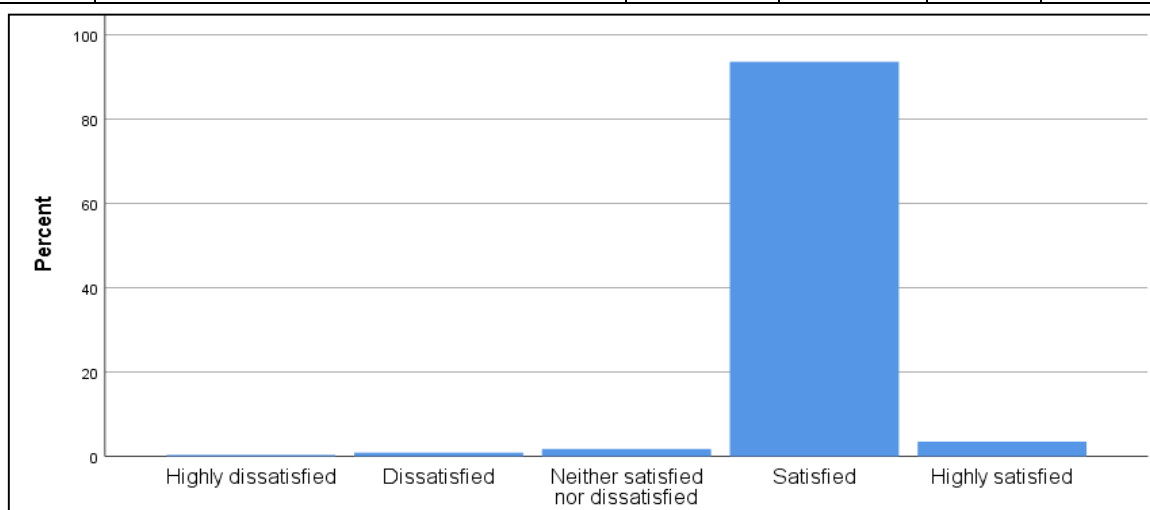
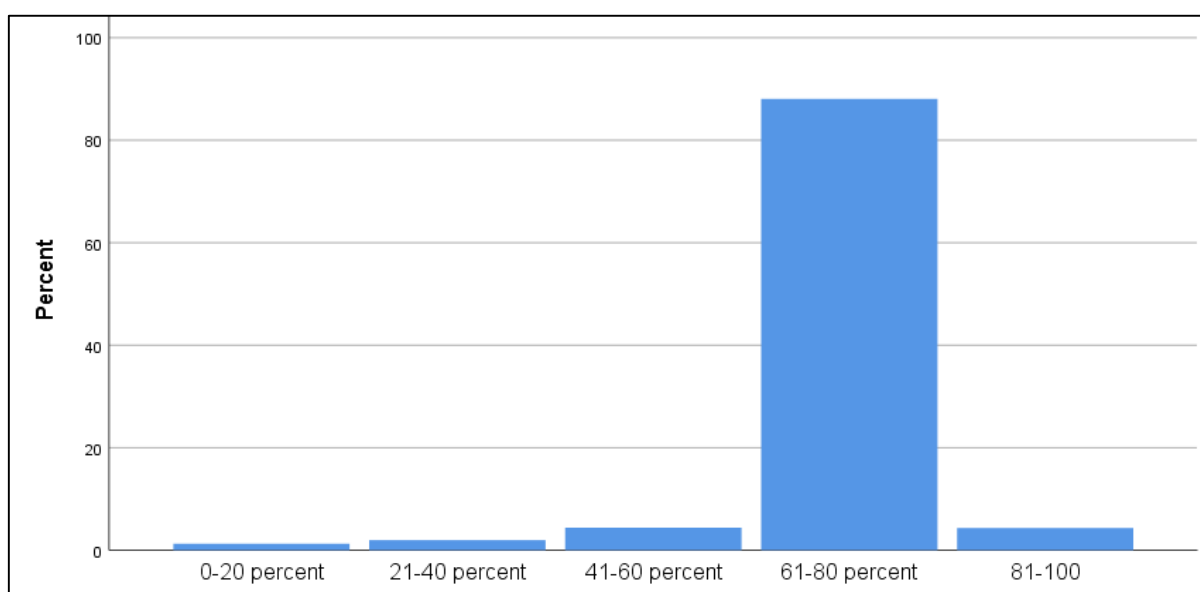


Figure 05.012: What is your level of satisfaction with the course you are taking at the college or higher education institution?

The thirteenth question item was designed to assess the overall rate of the student's academic performance in the higher learning institutions, and all participants in the students' category responded. Out of the 1843 students, 1.2% ($N = 23$) of the students had an overall academic performance of 0-20 percent, 2.0% ($N = 6$) of the students overall academic performance of 21-40 percent, 4.4% ($N = 81$) of the students overall academic performance of 41-60 per, 88.1% ($N = 1623$) of the students overall academic performance of 61-80 percent, while 4.3% ($N = 80$) of the students overall academic performance of 81-100 percent. Majority of the students had an above-average overall academic performance.

Table 5.014: Rate your overall academic performance in college/university

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-20 percent	23	1.2	1.2	1.2
	21-40 percent	36	2.0	2.0	3.2
	41-60 percent	81	4.4	4.4	7.6
	61-80 percent	1623	88.1	88.1	95.7
	81-100	80	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 5.13: Rate your overall academic performance in college/university**

5.3.2 Descriptive Analysis of Parents' Question Items

There are 9 question items designed to collect data from parents that were used for inferential analysis apart from the demographic data. The first two items assessed the parent's understanding of the NS programme. The following three items collected data about the parents' view on how attending the NS improved their children level of discipline and commitment to duties. The remaining four items assessed the parents' views regarding their sons' attitudes towards constructive feedback. The first question asked the parents to state whether they were aware of the NS programme. All the 106 parents responded to the question.

Of the number, 9.4% ($N = 10$) were only aware of the 9-month NS programme, 5.7% ($N = 6$) were only aware of the current 12-month NS programme. In comparison, 84.9% ($N = 90$) were aware of both programmes, meaning all parents included in the study were aware of the ongoing NS offered to youth by Emirati students.

Table 5.15: Which NS programme duration are you aware of?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	9-Month NS program	10	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Current 12-Month NS program	6	5.7	5.7	15.1
	Both Programs	90	84.9	84.9	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

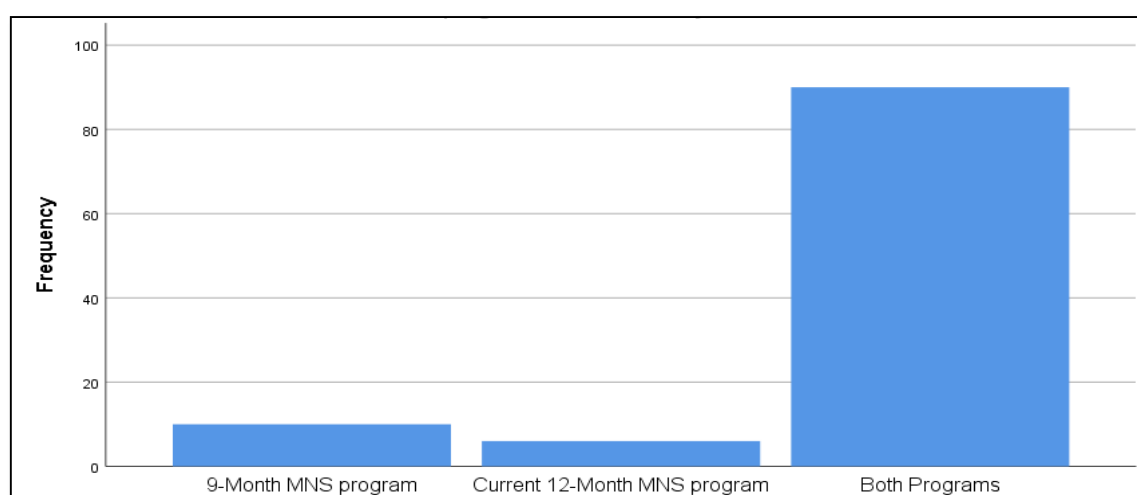


Figure 5.00014: Which MSN programme duration are you aware of?

The second question asked the parents to state the extent to which they believed that being an NS alumnus improved reasoning capacity of their son. Out of the 106 respondents in this participants category, 4.7% ($N = 5$) reported equal improvement in their son's reasoning capacity after NS, 27.4% ($N = 29$) reported that the reasoning capacity of their sons sharply improved after NS. In contrast, the remaining 67.9% ($N = 72$) recorded a highly strong improvement in their sons' reasoning capacity. The responses show that parents believe that

attending NS improved their sons' reasoning capacity, and this influences their decision-making ability.

Table 5.016: To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumnus improved reasoning capacity of your son?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Equal improvement in his reasoning capacity	5	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Strong improved their reasoning capacity	29	27.4	27.4	32.1
	Highly strong improvement in his reasoning capacity	72	67.9	67.9	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

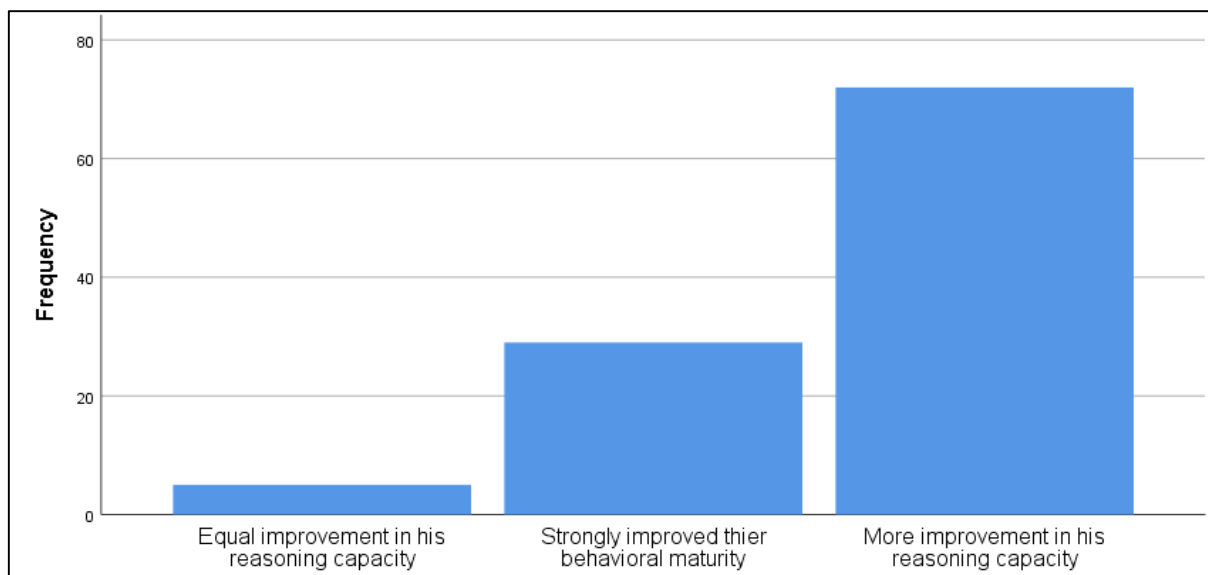


Figure 5.015: To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumnus improved reasoning capacity of your son?

The third question asked the parents to compare the level of their sons' discipline level before and after they had attended the NS. The entire 106 participants answered the question. Out of this number, 3.8% ($N = 4$) of the parents stated that they are slightly disciplined, 27.4% ($N = 29$) of the parents stated that there was equal discipline level after completing their NS, 67.0% ($N = 71$) of the participants stated their sons were slightly more disciplined. In comparison, 1.9% ($N = 2$) stated that their sons were more disciplined after NS. A higher

percentage of the parents tended to agree that the alumni's level of discipline improved after NS training, as presented in the following table and visualised in the corresponding bar graph.

Table 5.017: How do you compare the discipline level of your son before and after being an NS alumnus?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Slightly disciplined	4	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Equally disciplined	29	27.4	27.4	31.1
	Slightly more disciplined	71	67.0	67.0	98.1
	More disciplined	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

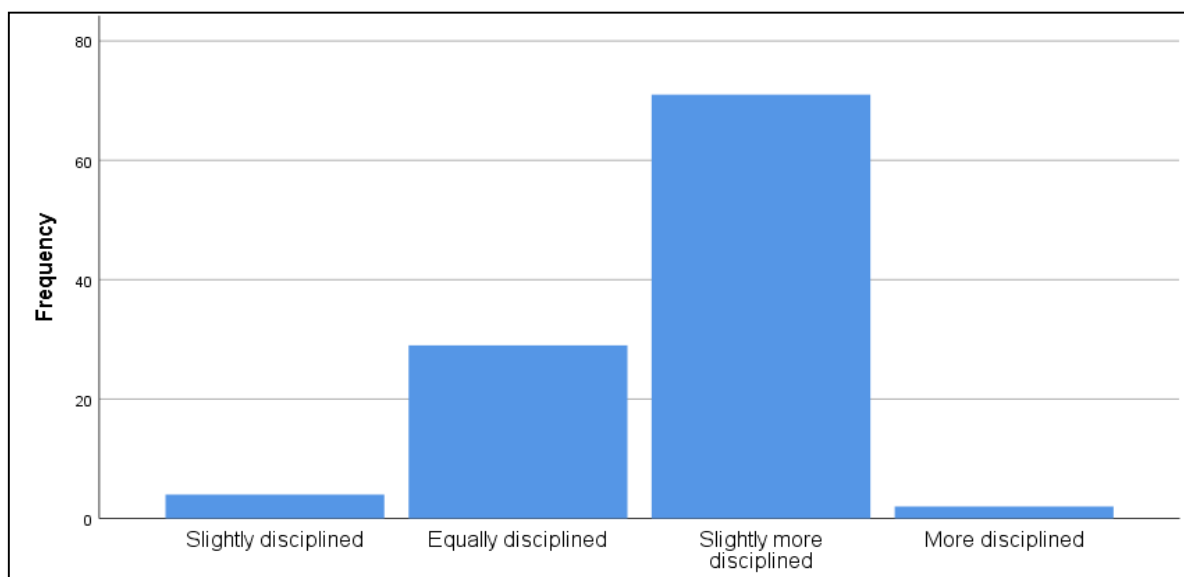


Figure 05.016: How do you compare the discipline level of your son before and after being an NS alumnus?

The fourth question was asked to assess the parents' views regarding the commitment level of their sons in their studies. The entire 106 participants answered the question. Out of this number, 35.7% ($N = 6$) of the parents stated that their sons have little commitment to their studies, 25.5% ($N = 27$) of the parents stated that their sons have a moderate commitment to their studies, 61.3% ($N = 65$) of the participants stated that their sons have a high level of commitment to their studies. In comparison, 7.5% ($N = 8$) of the parents stated that their sons

have a very high commitment to their studies. Majority of the parents believed that their sons' commitment level to their studies is above average, meaning that attending NS improved their level of commitment responsibilities, and that is why they are committed to their studies.

Table 5.018: How committed is your son to his studies?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Little commitment	6	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Moderate commitment	27	25.5	25.5	31.1
	High level commitment	65	61.3	61.3	92.5
	Very high commitment	8	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

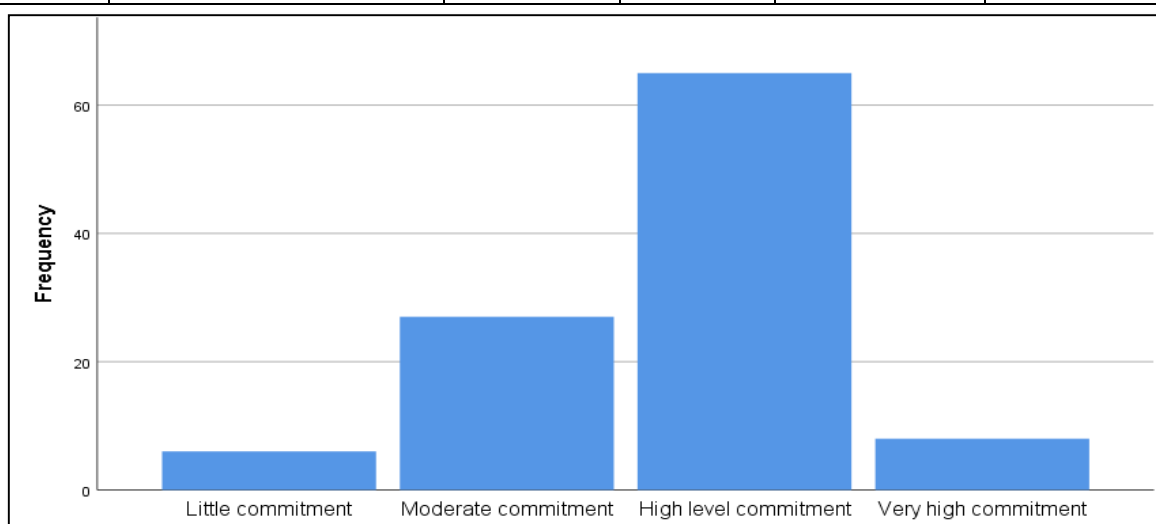


Figure 5.17: How committed is your son to his studies?

The fifth question asked the parents to rate the change in overall discipline level of their sons after attending the NS programme. The entire sample size of 106 participants answered the question. From this sample size, 4.7% ($N = 5$) of the parents stated that there was a low change in the overall discipline level of their sons after the NS training, 27.4% ($N = 29$) of the parents stated that there was a moderate change in the overall discipline level of their sons after the NS training, 61.3% ($N = 65$) of the participants stated that there was a high change in the overall discipline level of their sons after the NS training. In comparison, 6.6% ($N = 7$) of the parents stated that there was a very high change in the overall discipline level of their sons after

the NS training. From the results, a significantly high number of parents believed that there was a positive change in the overall discipline level of their sons after the NS training. The results could be interpreted to mean that attending NS improved level of discipline among alumni.

Table 5.19: Rate the change in overall discipline level of your son after the NS programme

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low change	5	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Moderate change	29	27.4	27.4	32.1
	High change	65	61.3	61.3	93.4
	Very high change	7	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

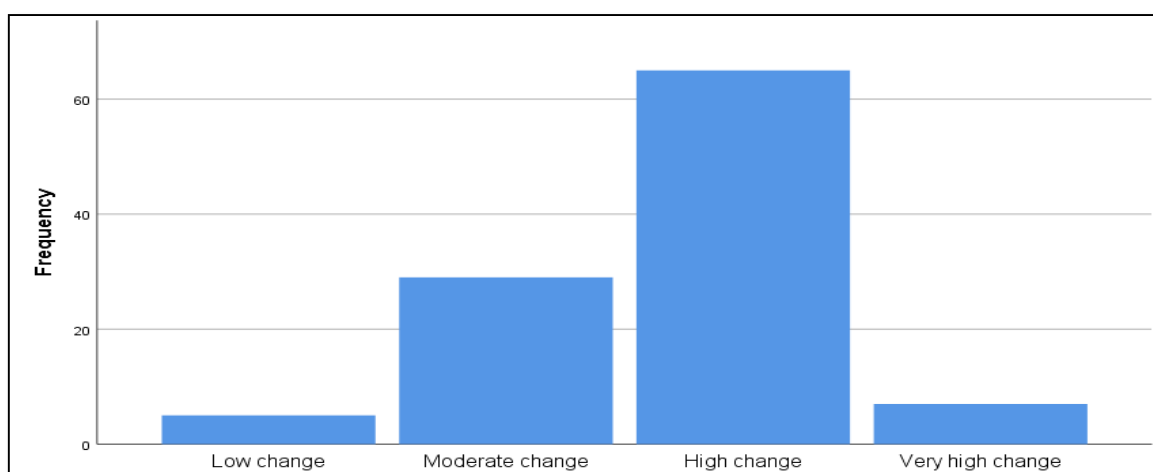


Figure 5.018: Rate the change in overall discipline level of your son after the NS programme

The sixth question asked the parents the impact of NS on the level of confidence of their sons in the degree programme they are taking at a college or higher education institution. All the 106 participants answered the question. Out of the participants, 0.9% ($N = 1$) of the parents stated that there was low confidence improvement in the degree programme they are taking at the higher learning institutions after attending the NS, 9.4% ($N = 10$) of the parents stated that there was moderate confidence improvement in the degree programme they are taking at the higher learning institutions after attending NS, 23.6% ($N = 25$) of the participants stated that there was high confidence improvement in the degree programme they are taking at the higher

learning institutions after attending the NS, while 66.0% ($N = 70$) of the parents stated that there was very high confidence improvement in the degree programme they are taking at the higher learning institutions after attending the NS. From the results, a significantly high number of parents believed that there is a significant confidence improvement in the degree programme their sons are taking at the higher learning institutions after attending the NS.

Table 5.20: What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low confidence	1	.9	.9	.9
	Moderate confidence	10	9.4	9.4	10.4
	High confidence	25	23.6	23.6	34.0
	Very high confidence	70	66.0	66.0	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

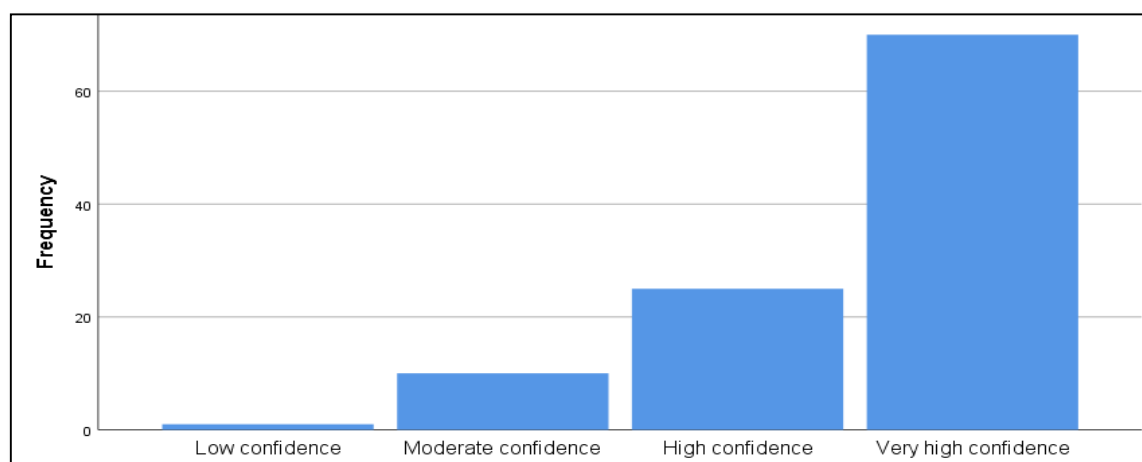


Figure 5.019: What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution?

The seventh question asked the parents to state how their NS alumni sons rate his satisfaction in teaching methods for classes they take at higher learning institutions. All the 106 participants answered the question. From this number, 0.9% ($N = 1$) of the parents believed that their sons were highly dissatisfied with the teaching methods for classes they take at the university, 4.7% ($N = 5$) of the parents believed that their sons were dissatisfied with the

teaching methods for classes they take at the university, 30.2% ($N = 32$) of the participants believed that their sons were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the teaching methods for classes they take at the university, 63.2% ($N = 67$) of the parents believed that their sons were satisfied with the teaching methods for classes they take at the university, while 0.9% ($N = 1$) of the parents believed that their sons were highly satisfied with the teaching methods for classes they take at the university.

Table 5.021: How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly dissatisfied	1	.9	.9	.9
	Dissatisfied	5	4.7	4.7	5.7
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	32	30.2	30.2	35.8
	Satisfied	67	63.2	63.2	99.1
	Highly satisfied	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

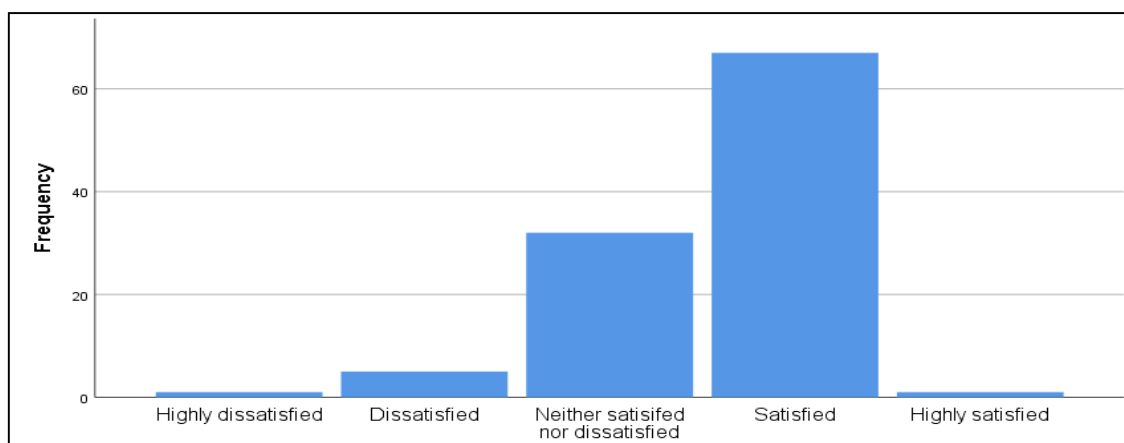


Figure 5.020: How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution?

The eighth question asked the parents to state the level of satisfaction of their NS alumni sons with the results of their assignments/examinations. All the 106 participants answered the question. Out of the number, 4.7% ($N = 5$) of the parents believed that their sons are dissatisfied with the results of their assignment and examinations they do in the higher learning institutions,

27.4% ($N = 29$) of the parents believed that their sons are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the results of their assignment and examinations they do in the higher learning institutions, 61.3% ($N = 65$) of the participants believed that their sons are satisfied with the results of their assignment and examinations they do in the higher learning institutions. In comparison, the remaining 6.6% ($N = 7$) of the parents believed that their sons are highly satisfied with the results of their assignment and examinations they do in the higher learning institutions. Majority of the parents believe their sons have high satisfaction level with assignments and examinations they do at the higher learning institutions.

Table 5.022: What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dissatisfied	5	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	29	27.4	27.4	32.1
	Satisfied	65	61.3	61.3	93.4
	Highly satisfied	7	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

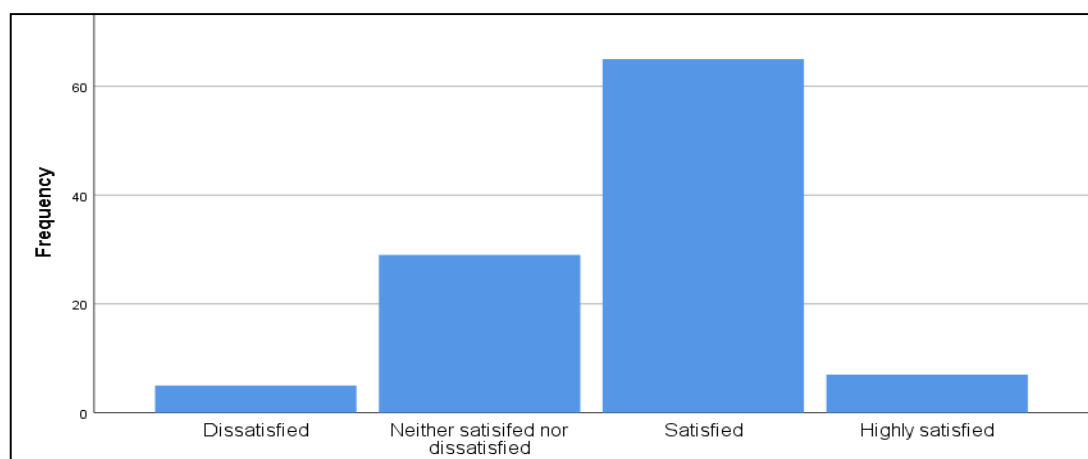


Figure 5.021: What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations?

The ninth question asked the parents to state the rate overall confidence level of NS alumni on the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution. All the 106

participants answered the question. From the sample size, 5.7% ($N = 6$) of the parents believed that their sons have low confidence level in the programme they take at the higher learning institutions, 25.5% ($N = 27$) of the parents believed that their sons have moderate confidence level in the programme they take at the higher learning institutions, 61.3% ($N = 65$) of the participants believed that their sons have high confidence level in the programme they take at the higher learning institutions. In comparison, the remaining 7.5% ($N = 8$) of the parents believed that their sons have a very high confidence level in the programme they take at the higher learning institutions. Majority of the parents believe their sons have significantly high confidence level with assignments and examinations they do at the higher learning institutions.

Table 5.023: Rate overall confidence level of NS alumni in the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low confidence level	6	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Moderate confidence level	27	25.5	25.5	31.1
	High confidence level	65	61.3	61.3	92.5
	Very high confidence level	8	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

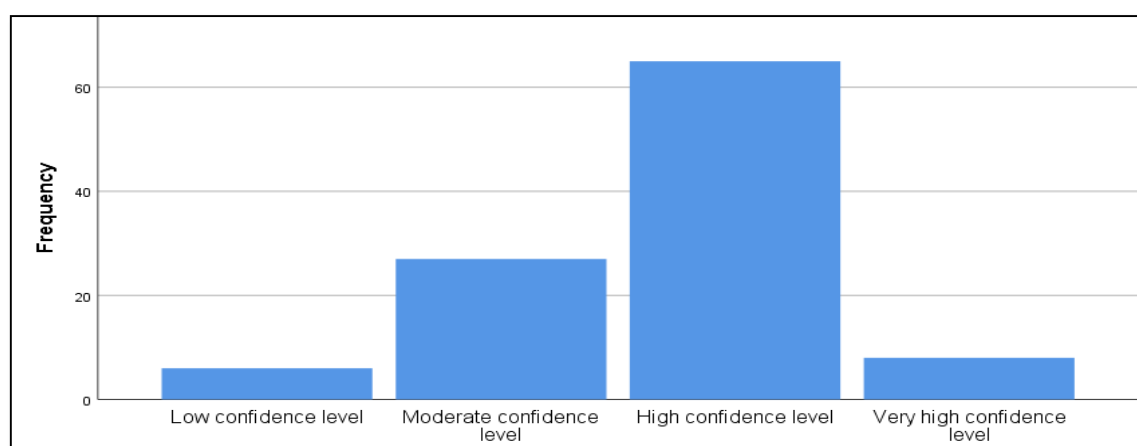


Figure 5.022: Rate overall confidence level of NS students on the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution

5.3.3 Descriptive Analysis of Teachers' Question Items

There 10 question items designed to collect data from teachers that were used for inferential analysis apart from the demographic data. The first two items assessed the teachers' understanding of the NS programme in the country. The following three items collected data about the teachers' view on how attending the NS improved their students' level of discipline and commitment to their academic work. Four question items were used to collect data about the teachers' views regarding their students' attitudes towards constructive feedback, with 1 question item asking about the overall academic performance of the students.

The first question asked the teachers to state which NS programme they were aware of. All the 106 teachers responded to the question. Out of this number, 10.4% ($N=11$) were only aware of the 9-month NS programme, 18.9% ($N=20$) were only aware of the current 12-month NS programme. In comparison, 63.2% ($N=67$) were aware of both programmes, 4.7% ($N=5$) were not aware of any NS programme while 2.8% ($N=3$) of the teachers were aware of other NS apart from the ones offered in the UAE. The results show that majority of the teachers were aware of the ongoing national service offered to young people by the Emirati government.

Table 5.24: Which NS programme duration are you aware of?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	9-Month NS program	11	10.4	10.4	10.4
	12-Month NS program	20	18.9	18.9	29.2
	Both	67	63.2	63.2	92.5
	None	5	4.7	4.7	97.2
	Other	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

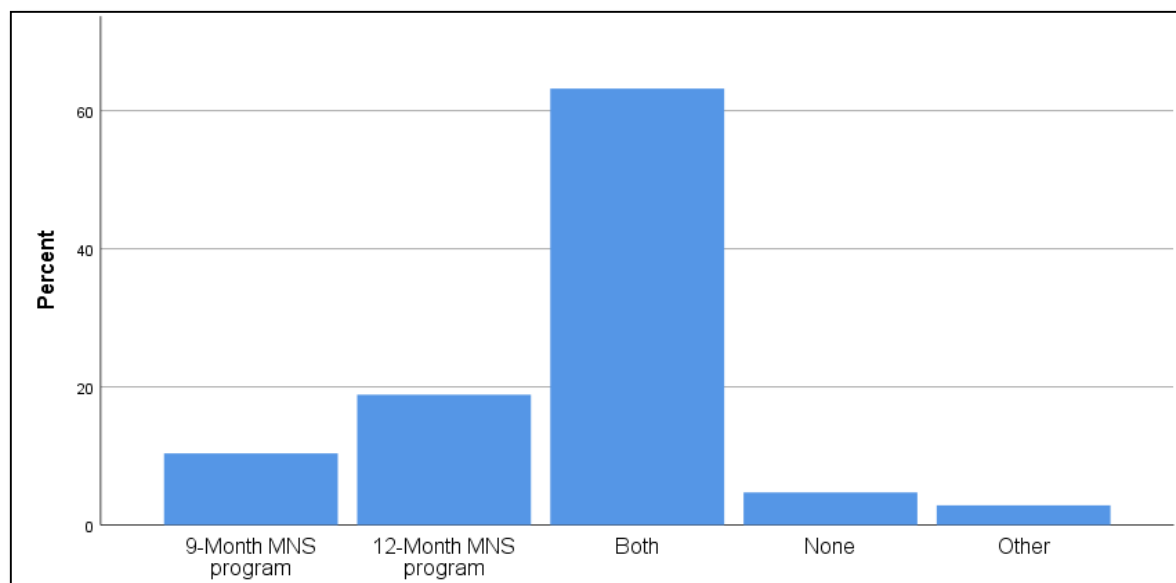


Figure 5.023: Which NS program duration are you aware of?

The second question asked the teachers to state their views about the extent to which they believed that being an NS alumni improved reasoning capacity level compared to the capabilities of their students who did not undergo NS program. Out of the 106 teachers who responded, 2.8% ($N = 3$) reported less improvement in their reasoning capacity compared to those who did not attend the programme, 8.5% ($N = 9$) reported slightly less improvement in their reasoning capacity compared to those who did not attend the programme, 16.0% ($N = 17$) of the teachers reported equal improvement in their reasoning capacity compared to those who did not attend the programme, 57.6% ($N = 61$) of the teachers reported slightly high improvement in their reasoning capacity compared to those who did not attend the programme. In comparison, the remaining 15.1% ($N = 16$) recorded more improvement in their reasoning capacity compared to those who not attend the programme improvement in their sons' reasoning capacity. The responses from the teachers show that majority of students who attended NS had significant improvement in their reasoning capacity compared to those who did not attend the programme. The results are presented in the following table and visualised in the bar graph below.

Table 5.025: To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumni improved reasoning capacity level compared to the capabilities of your students who did not undergo NS program?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less improvement in their reasoning capacity	3	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Slightly less improvement in their reasoning capacity	9	8.5	8.5	11.3
	Equal improvement in their reasoning capacity	17	16.0	16.0	27.4
	Slightly more improvement in their reasoning capacity	61	57.5	57.5	84.9
	More improvement in their reasoning capacity	16	15.1	15.1	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

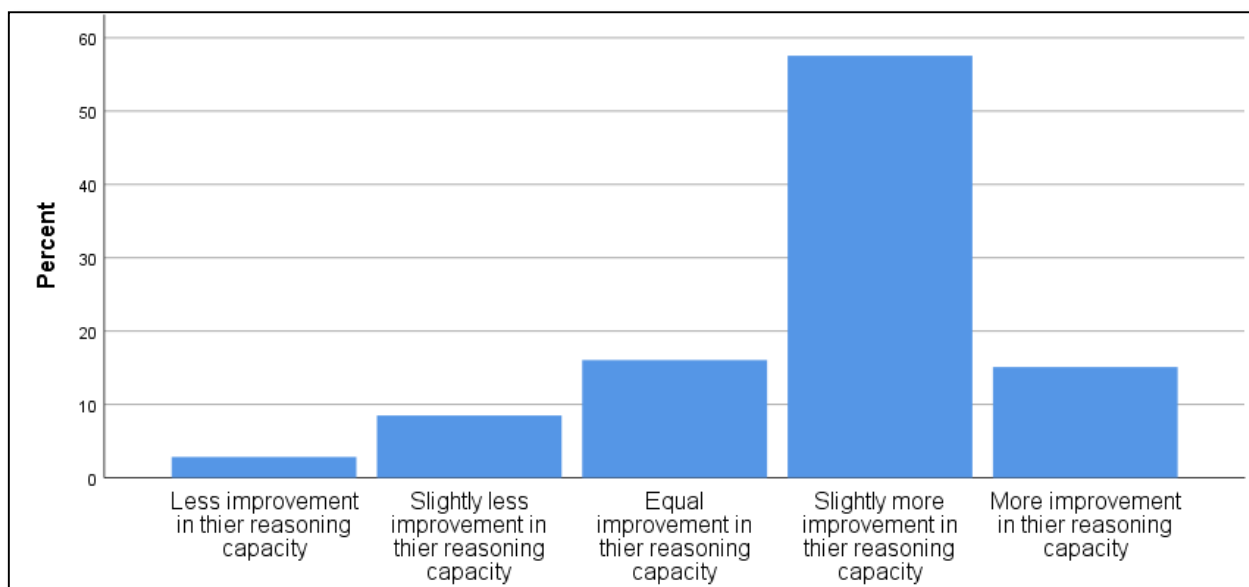


Figure 5.024: To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumnus improved reasoning capacity level compared to the capabilities of your students who did not undergo NS program

The third question was asked to determine from the teachers how they compared the discipline level of NS Alumni to non-NS alumni students in their higher learning institutions. The question was answered by all the 106 teachers who participated in the survey. As presented in the table and visualised in the bar graph below, 3.8% ($N = 4$) of the teachers believed National service alumni were less disciplined compared to non-National service students, 7.5% ($N = 8$) of the teachers believed NS alumni were slightly less disciplined compared to non-NS students,

84.0% ($N = 89$) of the teachers believed NS alumni were equally disciplined compared to non-NS students, and 4.7% ($N = 4$) of the teachers believed NS alumni were slightly more disciplined compared to non-NS students. The results show no significant difference in the discipline level between NS alumni and non-NS students in their higher learning institutions.

Table 5.026: How do you compare the discipline level of NS Alumni to non-NS alumni students?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less disciplined	4	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Slightly less disciplined	8	7.5	7.5	11.3
	Equally disciplined	89	84.0	84.0	95.3
	Slightly more disciplined	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

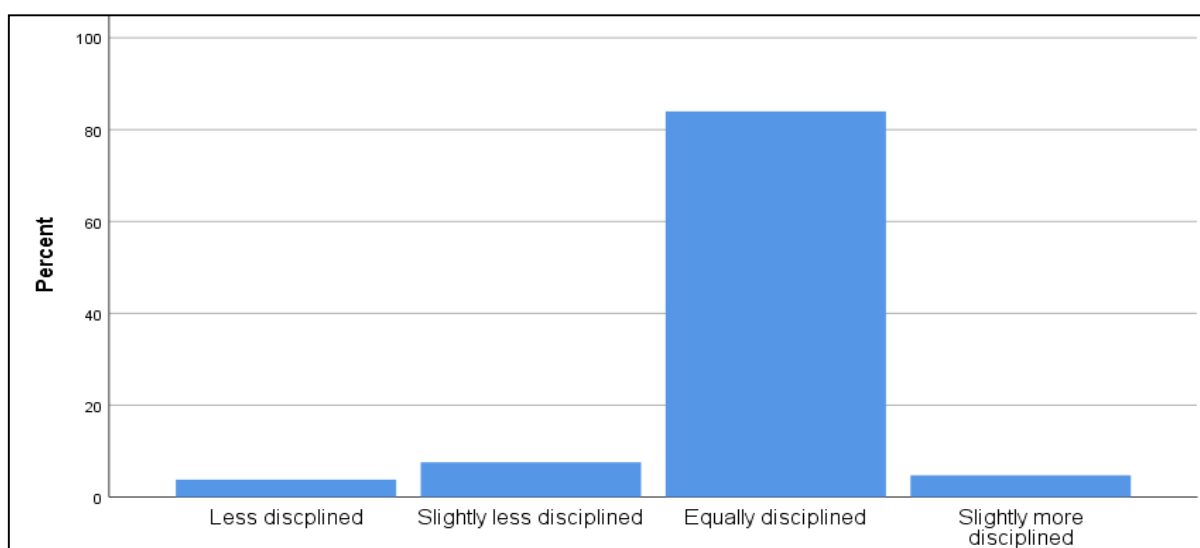


Figure 05.025: How do you compare the discipline level of NS alumni to non-NS alumni students?

The fourth question was designed to ask the teachers to state the rate of lecture attendance among the NS alumni students as a percentage. From all the 106 teachers who responded to the question, 1.9% ($N=2$) reported that NS alumni students attended less than 40% of the lectures, 3.8% ($N=4$) reported that NS alumni students attended 40-55% of the lectures, 7.5% ($N=8$) reported that NS alumni students attended 56-70% of the lectures, 84.0% ($N=89$) reported that NS alumni students attended 71-85% of the lectures, and 2.8% ($N=3$) reported that

NS alumni students attended more than 85% of the lectures. Majority of the teachers agreed that a higher percentage of NS alumni students in their higher learning institutions.

Table 5.27: What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<40 percent	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
	40-55 percent	4	3.8	3.8	5.7
	56-70 percent	8	7.5	7.5	13.2
	71-85 percent	89	84.0	84.0	97.2
	>85 percent	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

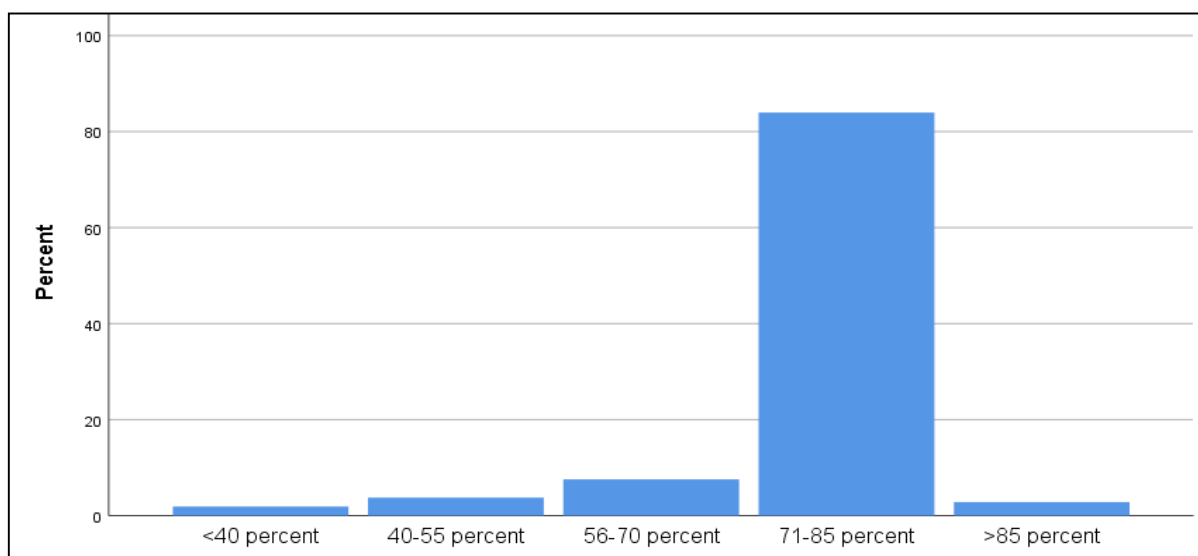


Figure 5.026: What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?

The fifth question item asked the teachers to rate the overall discipline level of their NS students during their first year in college or higher education institution. From the 106 teachers who responded to this question, 3.8% ($N = 4$) of the teachers believed NS alumni had disciplined during their first-year in college or higher education institution, 7.5% ($N = 8$) of the teachers believed NS alumni had moderate discipline level during their first year in college or higher education institution, 84.0% ($N = 89$) of the teachers believed NS alumni had high discipline level during their first year in college or higher education institution, and 4.7% ($N = 4$) of the

teachers believed NS alumni very high discipline level during their first year in college or higher education institution. The results show that teachers recorded a significant level of discipline in the majority of the NS alumni students during their first year in college or higher education institution, as presented in the following table and visualised in the bar graph

Table 5.028: Rate the overall discipline level of your NS students during their first year in college or higher education institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low discipline level	4	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Moderate discipline level	8	7.5	7.5	11.3
	High discipline level	89	84.0	84.0	95.3
	Very high discipline	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

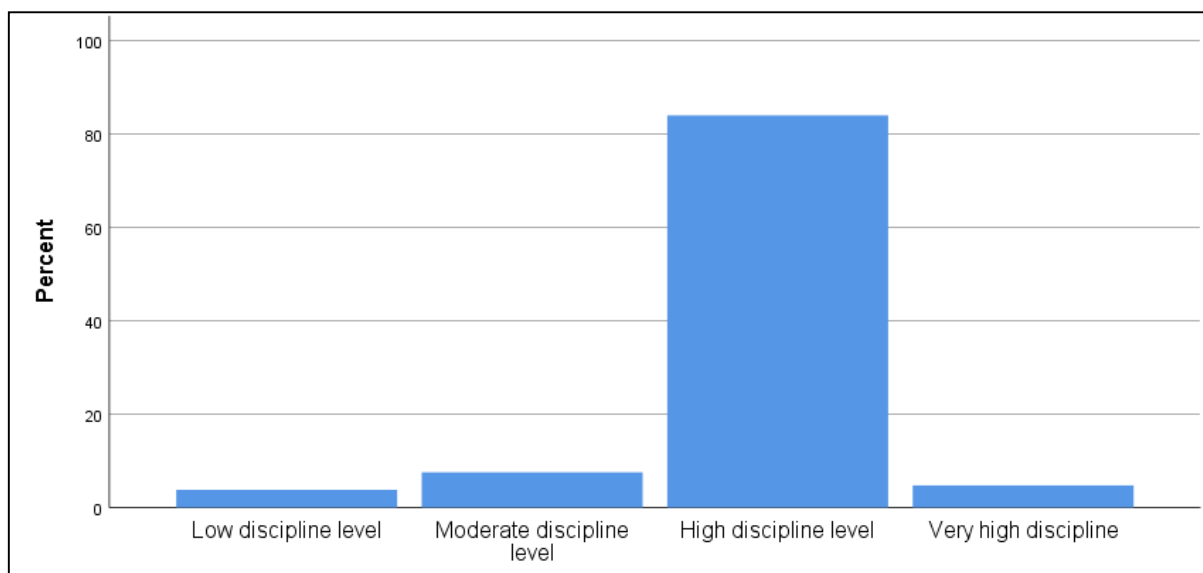


Figure 5.027: Rate the overall discipline level of your NS students during their first year in college or higher education institution

The sixth question was asked to assess the teachers' views about the impact of attending NS on the level of self-confidence of their students. All the 106 teachers responded to this question. Out of the number, 0.9% ($N = 1$) of the teachers believe that attending NS had no impact on the student's level of self-confidence in whatever they do, 6.6% ($N = 7$) of the teachers believe that attending NS had a low impact on the student's level of self-confidence in

whatever they do, 3.8% ($N = 8$) of the teachers believe that attending NS had a moderate impact on the student's level of self-confidence in whatever they do. Furthermore, 84.9% ($N = 90$) of the teachers believe that attending NS had a high impact on the student's level of self-confidence in whatever they do. In comparison, another 3.8% ($N = 8$) of the teachers believe that attending NS had a very high impact on the student's level of self-confidence in whatever they do. From the results presented below, the majority of the teachers believe that attending NS service has a significant impact on the self-confidence level of the students.

Table 5.029: What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No impact	1	.9	.9	.9
	Low impact	7	6.6	6.6	7.5
	Moderate impact	4	3.8	3.8	11.3
	High impact	90	84.9	84.9	96.2
	Very high impact	4	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

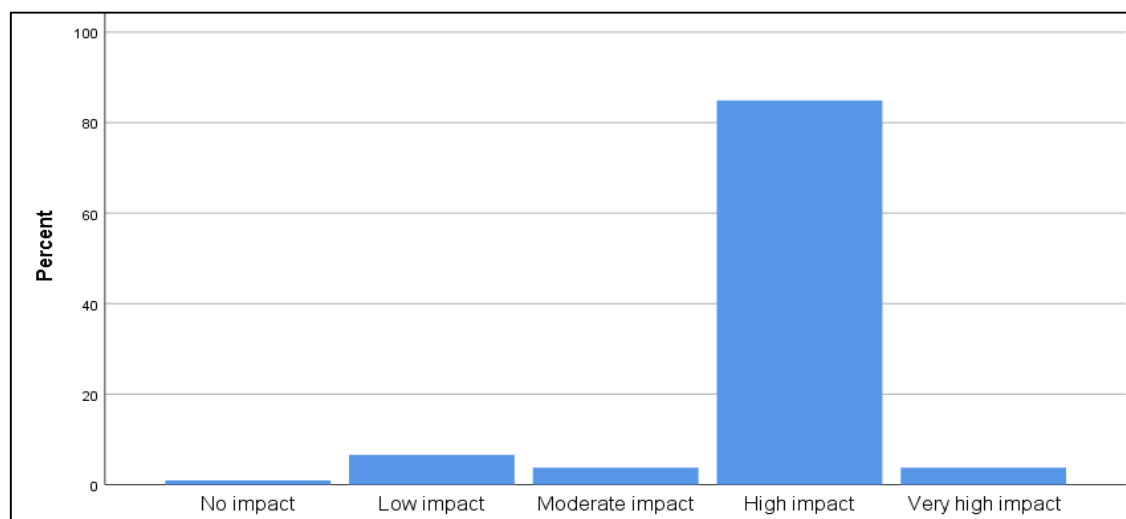


Figure 5.028: What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?

The eighth question asked the teachers to give their thoughts on how satisfied they think the NS alumni students in their institutions are with the teaching methods the teachers employ in their classes. The question was answered by all the 106 participants drawn from the higher

learning institution teachers. Out of this sample size, 3.8% ($N = 4$) of the teachers think that NS alumni students are dissatisfied with the teaching methods for classes they teach, 7.5% ($N = 8$) of the teachers think that NS alumni students are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the teaching methods for classes they teach, 84.0% ($N = 90$) of the teachers think that NS alumni students are satisfied with the teaching methods for classes they teach. In comparison, 4.7% ($N = 5$) of the teachers think that NS alumni students are dissatisfied with the teaching methods for classes they teach. Based on the results, the majority of the teachers think that NS alumni students have a significant level of satisfaction with the teaching methods for classes they teach.

Table 5.30: How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dissatisfied	4	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	7.5	7.5	11.3
	Satisfied	89	84.0	84.0	95.3
	Highly satisfied	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

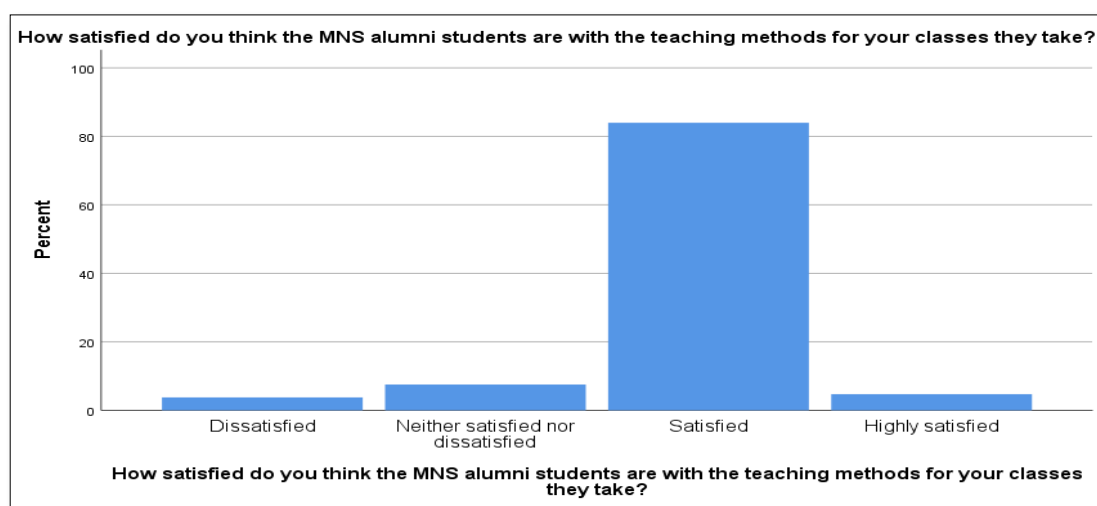


Figure 5.29: How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?

The ninth question was designed to examine teachers' views regarding the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations given to them compared to non-NS alumni students. Out of 106 teachers, 1.9% ($N = 2$) believed that NS alumni students are more dissatisfied with the results of the assignments and examinations, 5.7% ($N = 6$) believed that NS alumni students are slightly dissatisfied with the results of the assignments and examinations, 1.9% ($N = 2$) believed that NS alumni students are equally satisfied with the results of the assignments and examinations they are given, 84.9% ($N = 90$) believed that NS alumni students are slightly more satisfied with the results of the assignments and examinations. In contrast, 5.7% ($N = 6$) believed that NS alumni students are more satisfied with the results of the assignments and examinations. Majority of the teachers believed that NS alumni students have a higher level of satisfaction with the results of the assignments and examinations.

Table 5.031: In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More dissatisfied	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Slightly more dissatisfied	6	5.7	5.7	7.5
	Equally satisfied	2	1.9	1.9	9.4
	Slightly more satisfied	90	84.9	84.9	94.3
	More satisfied	6	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

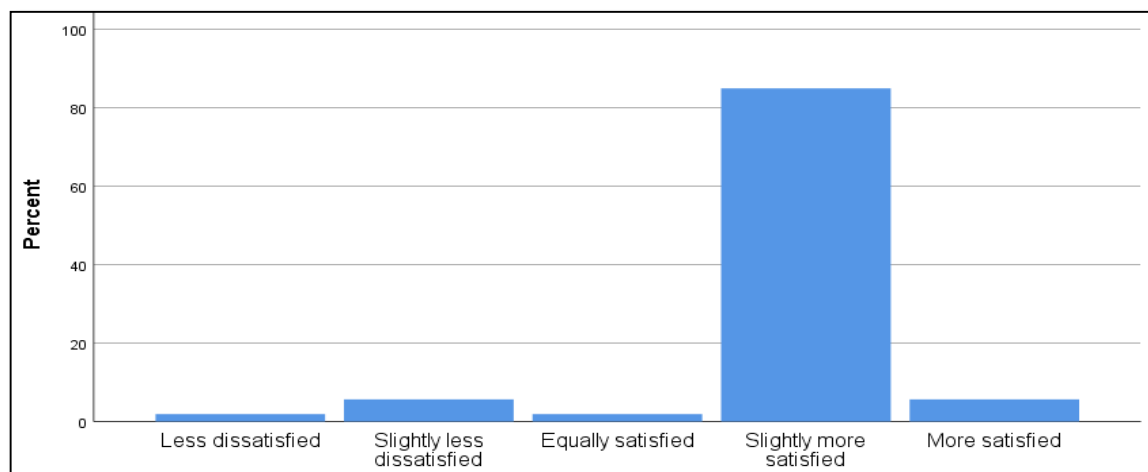
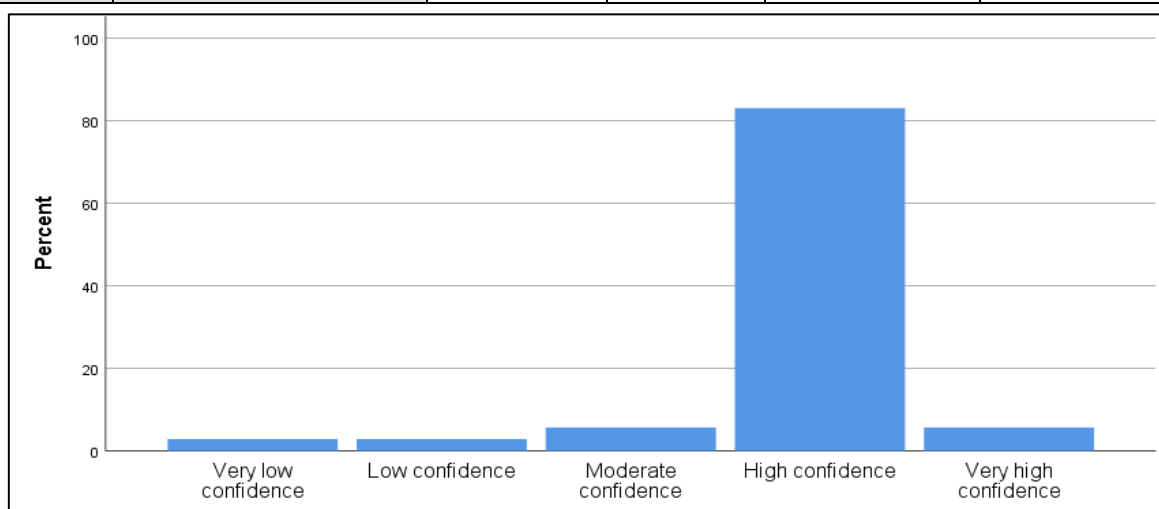


Figure 5.030: In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?

In the last question item, the teachers were asked to rate the overall confidence level of NS students in their lecture methods and mode of assessment used at the higher learning institution. Out of 106 teachers, 2.8% ($N = 3$) of the teachers reported very low confidence level of NS students in their lecture methods and mode of assessment used at the higher learning institution, 2.8 ($N=3$) of the teachers reported low confidence level of NS students in their lecture methods and mode of assessment used at the higher learning institution, and 5.7% ($N = 6$) of the teachers reported moderate confidence level of NS students in their lecture methods and mode of assessment used at the higher learning institution. On the other hand, 83.0% ($N = 88$) of the teachers reported a high confidence level of NS students in their lecture methods and mode of assessment used at the higher learning institution. In comparison, the rest of 5.7% ($N = 6$) of the teachers reported confidence level of NS students in their lecture methods and mode of assessment used at the higher learning institution.

Table 5.32: Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college or higher education institution.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low confidence	3	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Low confidence	3	2.8	2.8	5.7
	Moderate confidence	6	5.7	5.7	11.3
	High confidence	88	83.0	83.0	94.3
	Very high confidence	6	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 05.31: Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college of the higher education institution**

5.3.4 Summary of the Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis of the question items used to conduct inferential statistical analyses was undertaken to describe the frequency distribution and percentages of responses for the nominal variables measured using Likert-scale points. The data collected using the three questionnaires for students, parents and teachers were analysed descriptively. The results were related to the three main objectives of this research study. Based on the first objective aimed at assessing the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influences the level of discipline among the alumni while in higher learning institutions. The analysis of the students' data shows that students believe that their level of discipline increased after the NS programme. Majority of the parents also agreed that attending the NS programme improved the

discipline level of their sons. On the other hand, majority of the teachers believed that NS alumni students tend to be more disciplined than their non-NS counterparts. The descriptive analysis results signal that experiential skills learnt at NS significantly instil discipline and a high level of responsibility among the alumni.

The result of the descriptive analysis could have also been understood from the second objective context, which aimed at exploring the effects of participating in the national service program on the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback. The descriptive analysis of the students' data shows that majority of the students tend to have a high level of satisfaction with the teaching methods, assignments results and examination results. They also have confidence in the courses they undertake in the higher learning institutions. A higher percentage of parents who participated in the study also agreed that their sons take their studies seriously. On the other hand, majority of the teachers believed that NS alumni students had positive attitudes towards constructive feedback based on their satisfaction with the courses they undertake, assignment results and examination results as well as the lecture attendance rate. It is an indication that attending the NS programme has positive effects on the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback.

The descriptive analysis of the question items can also be understood from the light of the third objective of the study, which is to examine the influence of the candidate participation in the national service program on their ability to make informed decisions on the occupational choices. The descriptive analysis of the students' data revealed that they were able to make informed decision making in various issues. For instance, the majority of the students stated that their choice of the courses they were undertaking in the university was based on their skills and abilities but not any other reasons. Majority of parents also acknowledged that their son's reasoning capacity improved after attending the NS program. The teachers also believed that

compared to non-NS alumni students, the students who have attended NS tend to have better reasoning capacity. The descriptive analysis signals the importance of attending national service by young people because of the positive impact it has on their experiential skills and behavioural maturity. However, a clear picture of the relationship and impact using Pearson's correlation and regression analysis in the latter part of this chapter.

5.4 Demographics Analysis

The demographic data provides necessary information about the participants in this study. Creswell and Clark (2017) explain that the demographic data provides necessary information about the study participants, which is essential in explaining why their responses take a specific trend in a survey. Demographic information and analysis will be essential in planning for the students regarding the NS programme concerning its impact on academic performance (Connelly 2013). Four variables were treated as demographic information and analysed using descriptive statistics. The population groups whom demographic data were analysed included students, lecturers and parents as discussed in the following subsections.

5.4.1 Students Demographics

For the students, the demographic data included 1) respondents' age group, occupation, NS status and duration of the NS attended (9-month duration or 12-month duration). Demographic analysis of the data and presentation of the results was conducted as follows. The total number of students who participated in the study was 1843, and all of them filled the questionnaire forms and returned them to the researcher. Out of this number, 7.7% (n=141) of the students who participated in the study were aged 19-21 years, 65.5% (n=1208) were aged 22-24 years, 18.6% (n=342) of them were aged 25-27 years, 5.3% (n=98) of the participants were aged 28-30 years, while 2.8% (n=52) of the participants were aged above 30 years. Thus, the largest population of the student who participated in the study were aged 22-24 years,

constituting 66.0% of the total respondents in this category, as visualised in the following graph of figure 5.1 and shown in Table 5.33 below.

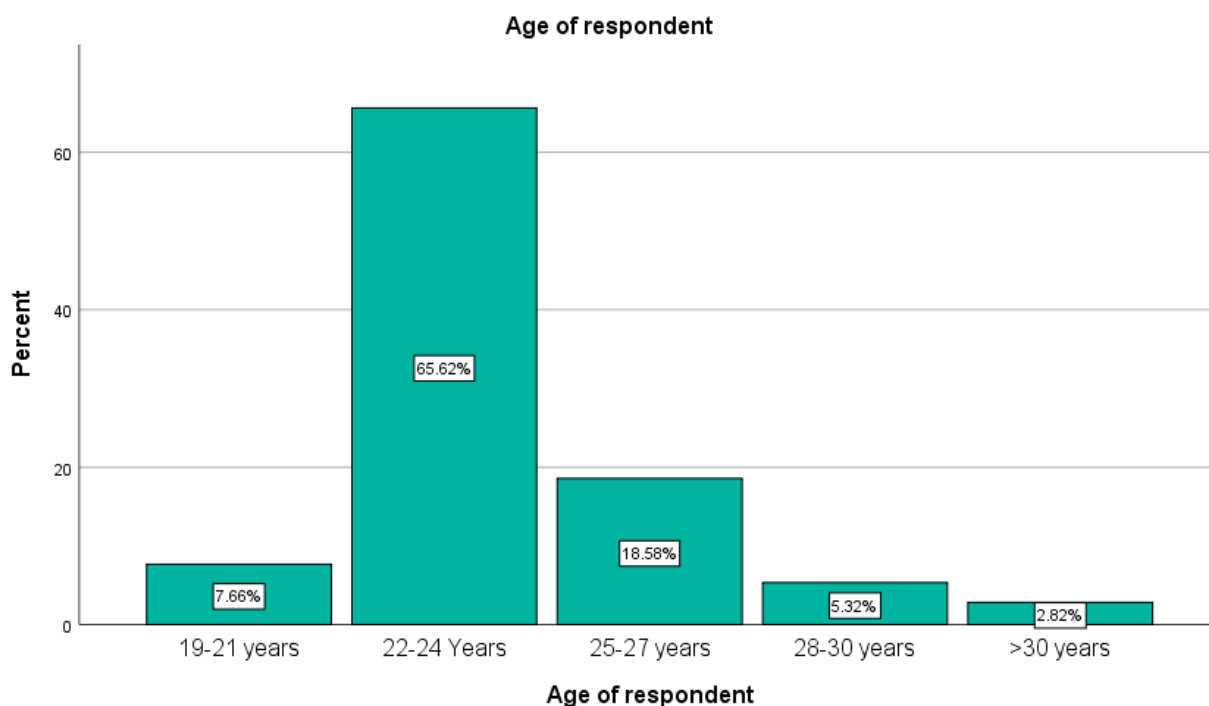


Figure 5.0032: Graphical representation of respondents' age.

Table 5.33: Age distribution of student participants

Age of respondent					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19-21 years	141	7.7	7.7	7.7
	22-24 Years	1208	65.5	65.6	73.3
	25-27 years	342	18.6	18.6	91.9
	28-30 years	98	5.3	5.3	97.2
	>30 years	52	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	1841	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.1		
Total		1843	100.0		

The second category of demographic information about students was occupation. The variable of occupation was considered among the demographic data because some students got employment or engaged in business activities after completing NS before or after joining the

college and universities. The data was important in knowing how influential NS was in terms of the establishment of their career paths even before joining higher learning institutions. Thus, in terms of occupation, 5.4% (n=99) of the students were in full-time employment, 1.9% (n=35) of them were in part-time employment, 3.7% (n=68) were in self-employment sector while 89.0% (n=1641) of the respondents in this category were full-time students. Therefore, as shown in the 5.34 below, the majority of the students in the university were dedicated to learning other than engaging in income-generating occupations. The following descriptive table represents the frequency distribution of the student respondents based on their occupation.

Table 05.034: Frequency distribution of student respondents by their occupations

What is your occupation?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Full-time employment	99	5.4	5.4	5.4
	Part-time employment	35	1.9	1.9	7.3
	Self-employment	68	3.7	3.7	11.0
	Full-time student	1641	89.0	89.0	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

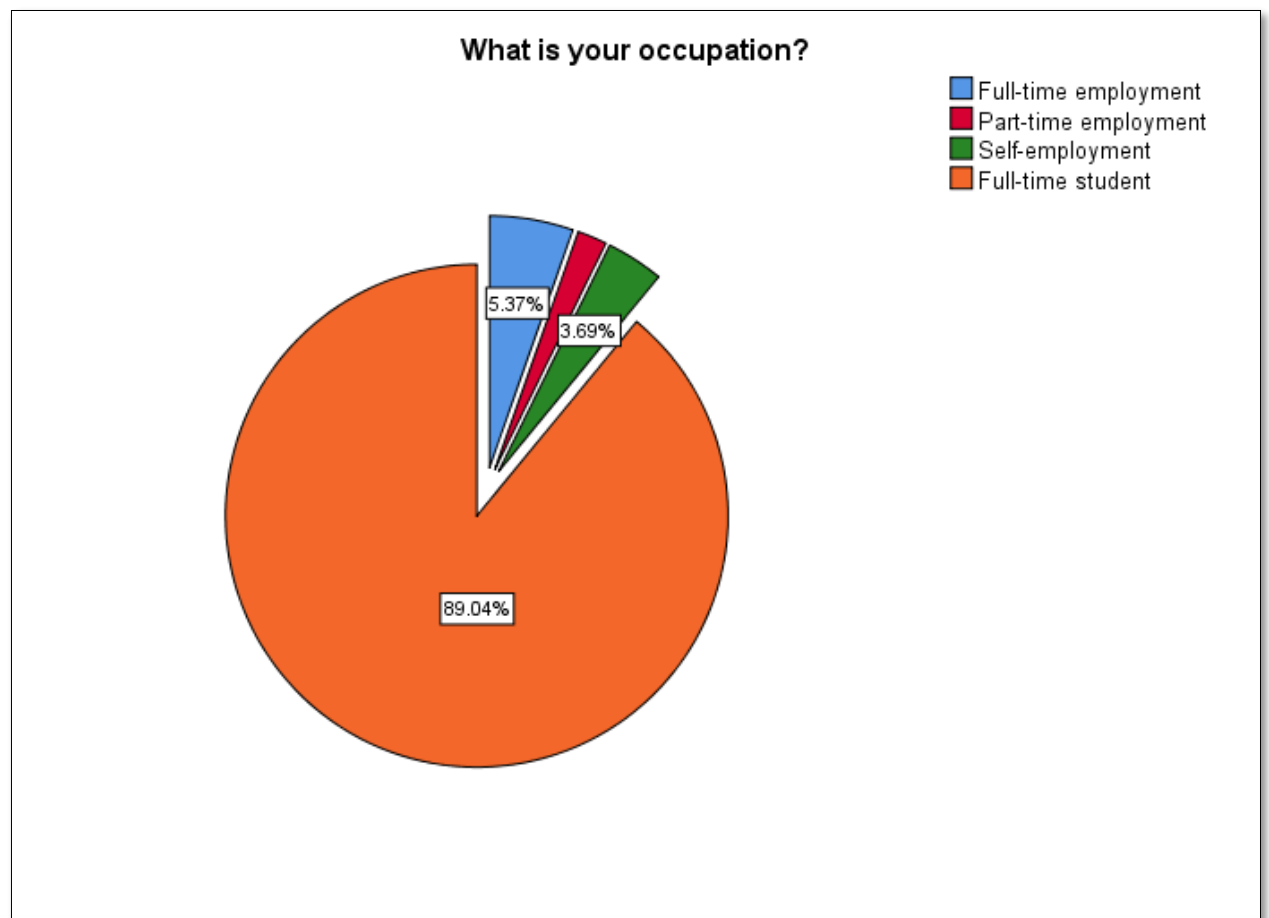
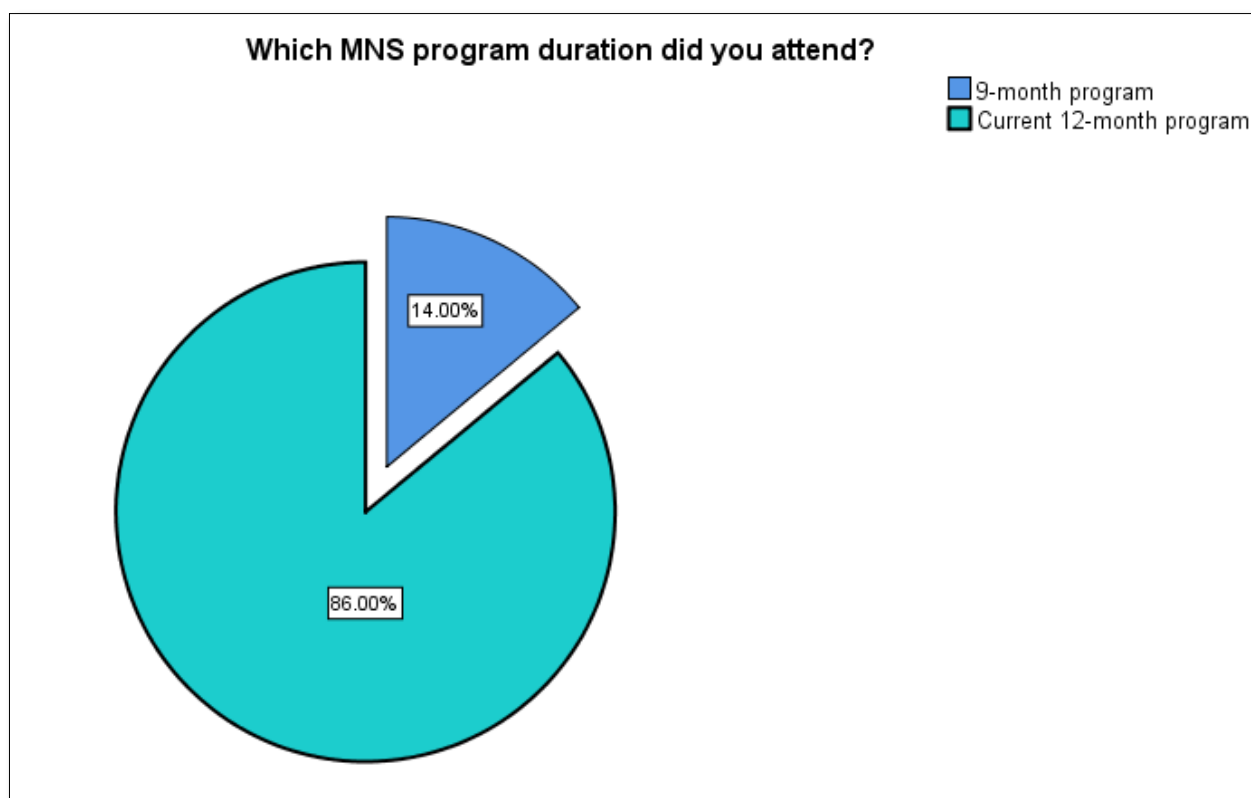


Figure 5.33: Pie chart visualising the distribution of students by occupation

Before the current NS programme of a duration of 12 months, the previous programme was designed to take nine months (Salama, 2014; and Reilly, 2014). In this context, the researcher wanted to know which NS programme students did attend. As represented in the following table, 14.0% ($n = 258$) of the respondents attended 9-month NS programme, 86.0% ($n = 1585$) of the respondents attended the current 12-months programme. Majority of the students attended the 12-month compulsory national programme as given represented in table 5.35 below.

Table 5.35: Frequency distribution of the NS program duration attended by the students

Which NS program duration did you attend?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	9-month program	258	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Current 12-month program	1585	86.0	86.0	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 5.034: Pie chart for the duration of the NS program**

The fourth variable in the context of demographic information of the students was the respondent's view about the influence of NS in their reasoning capacity. After attending the NS program, the students had different views regarding the impact of the NS programme on their reasoning capacity in a sense, making informed decisions about their education and career path. Out of the 1843 respondents, 0.4% ($n = 8$) had the opinion that the programme improved their reasoning capacity. On the other hand, 2.1% ($n = 38$) felt the program had slightly less

improvement in their reasoning capacity, 3.1% (n = 57) felt the program had equal improvement in their reasoning capacity, 79.0% (n = 1456) of the respondents believed that attending NS program had slightly more improvement in their reasoning capacity, while 15.4% (n = 284) of the students believed that attending NS program had more improvement in their reasoning capacity. The frequency distribution results of their responses were presented in table 5.36 below.

Table 05.036: Distribution of the student respondents based on their belief that being NS alumni improved their reasoning capacity compared to their immediate post-secondary school

To what extent do you believe being an NS alumni improved your reasoning capacity compared to your previous capabilities immediately after graduating from secondary school?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less improvement in my reasoning capacity	8	.4	.4	.4
	Slightly less improvement in my reasoning capacity	38	2.1	2.1	2.5
	Equal improvement in my reasoning capacity	57	3.1	3.1	5.6
	Slightly more improvement in reasoning capacity	1456	79.0	79.0	84.6
	More improvement in my reasoning capacity	284	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	1843	100.0	100.0	

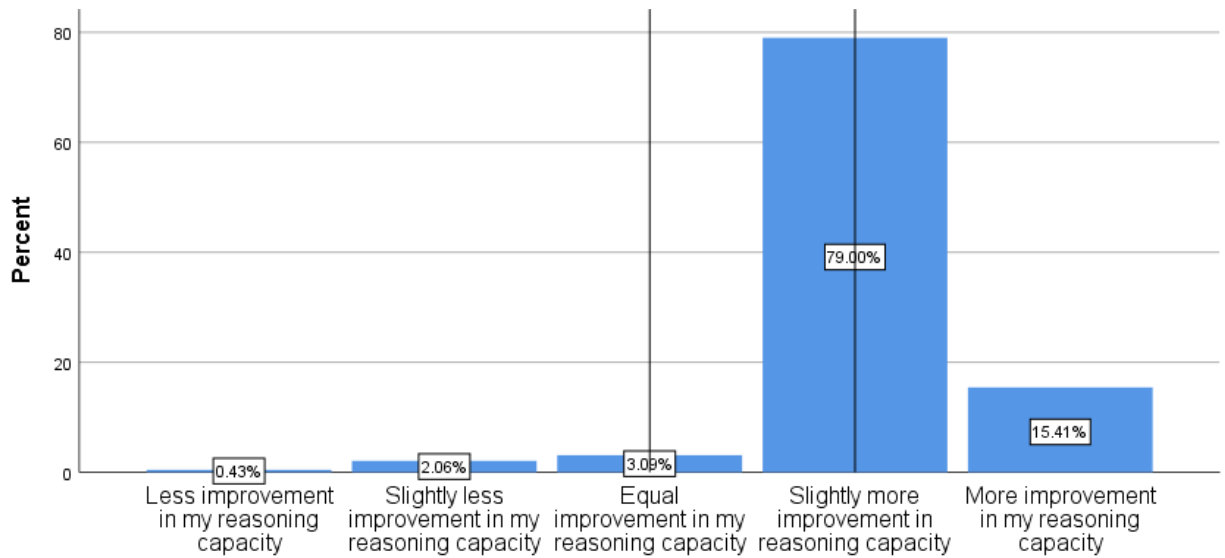


Figure 5.35: Bar chart to display reasoning capacity

5.4.2 Lecturer's Demographics

The total number of teachers/ lecturers who were included in this study were 106, and all of them filled the questionnaire forms served to them appropriately before returning them to the researcher. The data categorised as the demographic information of these participants is the age of respondents. In terms of the age group of the respondents as shown in table 4.33 below, 7.5% (n=8) of the teachers who participated in the study were aged below 35 years, 28.3% (n=30) were aged 35-44 years, 30.2% (n=32) of them were aged 45-54 years, 17.0% (n=18) of the participants were aged 55-64 years, while 17.0% (n=18) of the participants were aged above 65 years. Thus, the largest population of the teachers or lecturers involved in the study were aged above 44 years. The descriptive analysis of the respondents' age group was represented in table 5.37 below.

Table 5.037: Frequency distribution of the teachers' age group

Age of respondent				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<35 years	8	7.5	7.5
	35-44 years	30	28.3	35.8
	45-54 years	32	30.2	66.0
	55-64 years	18	17.0	83.0
	>65 years	18	17.0	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0

In terms of the teachers/lecturers awareness of the NS programmes offered to young people after secondary education; 10.4% (n = 11) were aware of the former 9-month NS programme, 18.9% (n = 20) were aware of the current 12-month NS programme, 63.2% (n = 67) of the respondents were aware of both programmes, 4.7% (n = 5) were unaware of the programmes, while 2.8% (n = 3) of the respondents provided other explanations. As shown in table 5.38, the majority of the teachers (63.2%) are aware of both the current 12-month programme and former 9-month programme, with 29.3% of the respondents aware of either the 12-month or 9-month programme.

Table 5.38: Distribution of the teachers/lecturers based on their awareness of NS programmes.

Which NS program duration are you aware of?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	9-Month NS program	11	10.4	10.4
	12-Month NS program	20	18.9	29.2
	Both	67	63.2	92.5
	None	5	4.7	97.2
	Other	3	2.8	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0

5.4.3 Parent's Demographic Analysis

Three variables were considered for demographic analysis of the parents are 1) age of the respondents, 2) occupation of the respondents and 3) education qualification. As explained by Creswell and Clark (2017), the demographic data is analysed to provide general information about the participants included in the study. The results were presented in the following sections.

The total number of parents included in the study were 106. In terms of the age of the respondents, 11.3% (n = 12) of the parents who responded were aged below 35 years, 8.5% (n = 9) of the parents were aged 35-44 years, 45.3% (n = 48) of them were aged 45-54 years, 19.8% (n = 21) were aged 55-64 years while 15.1% (n = 16) were aged 65 and above years. From the analysis, the majority of the parents who participated in the study were aged between 45 years and 54 years. The results were presented in table 5.39 below.

Table 05.39: Distribution of the age of respondents in the parents' category.

Age of respondents				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<35 years	12	11.3	11.3
	35-44 years	9	8.5	19.8
	45-54 years	48	45.3	65.1
	55-64 years	21	19.8	84.9
	65 and above years	16	15.1	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0

In terms of the occupation of the respondents, 5.7% (n =6) of the parents who responded were in full-time employment, 68.9% (n = 73) of the parents were in part-time employment, 13.2% (n = 14) of them were self-employed, 6.6% (n = 7) were retired while 5.7% (n = 6) were unable to work. From the analysis, the majority of the parents who participated in the study were in part-time employment. The results were presented in table 5.40 below.

Table 05.040: Distribution of the parents based on their occupations.**What is your occupation?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Full-time employment	6	5.7	5.7	5.7
Part-time employment	73	68.9	68.9	74.5
Self-employment	14	13.2	13.2	87.7
Retired	7	6.6	6.6	94.3
Unable to work	6	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

In terms of the respondents' highest education qualification, 7.5% (n =8) of the parents who responded had primary education as the highest education qualification, 37.7% (n = 40) of the parents had secondary level as the highest education qualification, 26.4% (n = 28) of them were diploma holders, 19.8% (n = 28) were degree holders while 8.5% (n = 9) were had post-graduate education. From the analysis, the majority of the parents who participated in the study had secondary education as the highest qualification level. The results were presented in table 5.41 below.

Table 05.041: Distribution of parents based on their highest level of educational qualification.**What is your highest educational qualification?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Primary level	8	7.5	7.5	7.5
Secondary level	40	37.7	37.7	45.3
Diploma level	28	26.4	26.4	71.7
Degree level	21	19.8	19.8	91.5
Post-graduate level	9	8.5	8.5	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

In terms of the respondents' awareness of the NS programmes in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 9.4% (n =10) of the parents who participated in the study were aware of the 9-month NS programme, 5.7% (n = 6) of the parents were aware of the current 12-month NS programme, 84.9% (n = 90) of them were aware of both the previous 9-month NS programme and the current 12-month NS programme. None of the participants was unaware of the programme. From the analysis, the majority of the parents who participated in the study had secondary education were aware of both the former 9-month and current 12-month NS programme. The results were presented in table 5.42 below.

Table 05.42: Distribution of the parents based on their awareness of the NS programme in the United Arab Emirates.

Which NS programme duration are you aware of?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
9-Month NS program	10	9.4	9.4	9.4
Current 12-Month NS program	6	5.7	5.7	15.1
Both Programs	90	84.9	84.9	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

5.5 Reliability Tests Analysis

Reliability test is essential in ensuring that the questionnaire tool developed using the Likert scale was consistent. Cronbach's alpha is widely used to measure internal consistency, also called the reliability of the data collected using the questionnaire tool. The reliability of the scales determines whether the collected data is reliable and can be applied in the future by other researchers or policymakers (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). For the current study, the reliability test for the data based on Cronbach's alpha was conducted using SPSS software to determine the internal consistency of the data collected. The approach adopted in this analysis was based

on the criteria developed by Cronbach in 1951 to assess reliability and validity of the data collected from the study participants. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), the reliability and validity of the anticipated responses to the survey must be evaluated in order to ascertain whether there is an internal consistency in terms of measurements approach. A Cronbach alpha of more than 0.7 for a given data is considered to have a high degree of reliability, as stated by Cooper and Schindler (2014).

Nevertheless, the degree of reliability is within the acceptable level when the value of Cronbach alpha (α) lies between 0.35 and 0.7. Otherwise, a value below 0.35 is considered to be not reliable, and consequently, such data cannot be used for further analysis. For this research study, where the goal is to assess the impact of NS, a value of Cronbach alpha, which is more than 0.35, will be considered for analysis (Tabachnick and Fidel, 2010). The first reliability test was conducted on the data obtained from the university students based on their responses on attending NS programme, academic performance, attitude and decision-making process.

5.5.1 Academic Performance and Discipline

For academic performance and disciplinary level (coded with the name PDS) of the students in the university, five items had their reliability analysed to ascertain their internal consistency levels. As illustrated in the following table 5.43, the Cronbach's Alpha for the Academic Performance and Discipline items is 0.632, which is more than 0.3. Therefore, we can conclude that there is sufficient reliability and hence, sufficient internal consistency for the disciplinary level items, as explained in the study conducted by Tabachnick and Fidell (2010).

Table 05.043: Reliability Statistics for academic performance and discipline in the university.
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.632	5

The following table 5.44 shows the results for exploring the Corrected Total-Item Correlation for the five items. These included the high school overall grade as a percentage, current university cumulative grade in GPA, improvement in academic performance in university compared to high school performance, GPA score for the previous semester, and overall discipline level during their stay in the college or higher learning institution. The explorative analysis proved a strong correlation among the items because the Correlation indices of the four items were above, apart from the overall high school grade item, which was above 0.55, which is more than the threshold value of 0.3, with the Correlation indices ranging between 0.232 and 0.522. For Cronbach's alpha, if an item is deleted as shown in the table, all the items should remain the same because the over Cronbach only drops when the four items are deleted. The results have proven that items in the disciplinary level variable are reliable and can be used for further analysis of the data, as shown in table 5.44 below.

Table 5.0044: Item-Total Statistics for academic performance and discipline of students

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What is your high school overall grade as a percentage?	15.82	1.356	.232	.665
What is your current university cumulative GPA?	14.78	1.164	.485	.524
How has your academic performance improved in university compared to your high school performance?	14.71	1.426	.386	.583
What was your GPA score for the previous semester?	14.76	1.176	.522	.506
Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution	14.73	1.391	.345	.597

5.5.2 Attitude

For the attitude change among the students after attending the NS program, five items were included and used for reliability analysis. The items included the level of self-confidence in the course taken, satisfaction level with the teaching methods, level of satisfaction with the assignment, level of satisfaction with the examination, and balance between academic work and co-curricular activities. As illustrated in the following table 5.45, the Cronbach's Alpha for the attitude items is 0.774, which is more than 0.7. Therefore, from the results, we can conclude that our data has strong reliability and hence, high internal consistency for the five attitude items (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2010).

Table 5.45: Reliability Statistics for students' attitude items

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.774	5

Furthermore, the data demonstrated in the following table 5.46 are the results for exploring the Corrected Total-Item Correlation of the four items of the attitude variable. The analysis proved that there is a strong correlation between the four items for attitude. This is because the Correlation indices among the items were above 0.7, which is more than the reliability threshold value of 0.3, with the Correlation indices ranging between 0.472 and 0.648. For Cronbach's Alpha if Item is deleted, as presented in the following table, all the items should remain the same because the over Cronbach only drops when the four items are deleted. As a result, it is proven that items in the attitude variable are reliable.

Table 5.46: Item-Total Statistics for student's attitude.

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What is your level of self-confidence in the course you are taking at your college or higher education institution?	15.90	1.374	.472	.762
What is the level of satisfaction with the teaching methods for your classes?	15.85	1.386	.629	.706
What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?	15.88	1.414	.522	.740
What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?	15.86	1.417	.648	.704
How well do you balance your academic work with extra-curricular activities?	15.89	1.388	.498	.750

5.5.3 Decision Making

In the decision-making variable, there were two items used to conduct reliability analysis. As demonstrated in the following table 5.47, the Cronbach's Alpha for the decision-making items is 0.955, which is more than the 0.3 thresholds of sufficient reliability. It can, therefore, be concluded from the results that the items have relatively stable reliability, and hence, there is sufficient high internal consistency of the data in the three items (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2010).

Table 5.047: Reliability Analysis for decision-making data

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.955	2

As demonstrated in the following table 5.48, the results obtained for exploring the Corrected Total-Item Correlation of the two items for the decision-making variables proved that there is a strong correlation between the two items. That is because the Correlation indices between them were above 0.35, which is more the threshold value of 0.3, with a Correlation index of 0.947. For Cronbach's Alpha If Item is deleted, as demonstrated in the following table, two items should remain the same because the overall Cronbach's alpha will only drop when one of the items is deleted. As a result, the representation in the following table has proven that items in decision-making variable are reliable.

Table 5.48: Item-Total Statistics for decision-making processes

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What was the basis of your choice of course?	3.99	.116	.915	.945
What is your level of satisfaction with the course you are undertaking at the college or higher education institution?	4.00	.129	.915	.902

The second reliability test was conducted to determine whether the data collected from the teachers were valid, reliable and that there was reasonable internal consistency within the data (Tabachnick and Fidel, 2010). The test, as shown in the previous sections, is essential in establishing whether the data was effective for further inferential statistical analysis based on the Cronbach's alpha values (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The three variables on which the reliability test was performed are 1) lecturer's understanding of the NS programme, 2) lecturer's views on the discipline level of NS students, and 3) views of the teachers about the attitude of the students about courses they take at the university as in the below section.

5.5.4 Teachers' Views on Students Attitude

In the teachers' view on the students' attitude toward the courses they undertake in the university, there were four items used to assess the internal consistency of the data for further analysis. The reliability test analysis for these variables was conducted, and the results presented in table 5.49 below. As a result, the overall Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.930, which is more than the threshold value of 0.35. The results show a higher level of reliability and therefore, strong internal consistency of the data among the two items of teachers' views on the students understanding about the disciplinary level of the NS students.

Table 5.049: Reliability statistics for the teachers' views on the attitude of NS students as compared to non-NS students.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.930	4

Furthermore, the following table 5.50 provided the results of the Item-Total Statistics of the two parameters to analyse the reliability of "teachers' views about the influence of NS on students' attitude" data. Based on the results obtained from the assessment of the Corrected

Item-Total Correlation in the table, the items have strong Correlation between the four items because their correlational indices are all higher than 0.3, as they have the values ranging from 0.501 and 0.901. Additionally, the value of the Cronbach's Alpha when the item is deleted, as demonstrated in the table, should all remain the same. This is because the overall value of the Cronbach's Alpha can only significantly decrease when all the four items were deleted. The conclusion drawn from this reliability analysis is that the four items regarding the teachers' perceptions about the influence of NS programme in the attitude of students on the courses they are undertaking are valid, reliable and have sufficient internal consistency to be used for further inferential statistical analysis.

Table 5.050: Item-Total Statistics for teachers' perceptions about the influence NS programme on their attitudes in the courses they are taking in the university.

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?	11.62	2.847	.939	.901	.873
How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?	11.57	3.638	.690	.501	.953
In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?	11.59	2.777	.897	.859	.888
Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college or higher education institution.	11.60	2.851	.844	.761	.907

5.5.5 Understanding Level of NS

In the NS programme understanding section, there were two items, which were included to assess the level of teachers' understanding of the NS programme and its influence in students' discipline and attitude towards the courses they are studying. The reliability test analysis for these variables was conducted. As shown in table 5.51 below, the overall Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.930, which is more than the threshold value of 0.35. The results show a higher level of

reliability and therefore strong internal consistency of the data among the two items of teacher's understanding about the NS programme in the country and how the programme influence their conduct and behaviour in the university.

Table 05.51: Reliability statistics for the teachers' understanding of the NS programme

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.930	2

On the other hand, the following table 5.52 shows the Item-Total Statistics of the two parameters for analysing the reliability of “teachers’ understanding of NS programme” data. Based on the results obtained from examination of the Corrected Item-Total Correlation in the following table, the items have proved to have a strong Correlation between them because their correlational indices are all higher than 0.3 as they have a value of 0.765. Altogether, the Cronbach’s Alpha values when the item is deleted, as demonstrated in the table, should all remain the same because the overall value of the Cronbach’s Alpha can only decrease when all the two items were deleted. To conclude, the items in teachers understanding of the NS programme are valid, reliable and with sufficient internal consistency for further inferential statistical analysis.

Table 05.52: Item-Total Statistics for teachers' understanding of NS programme

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Which NS program duration are you aware of?	3.74	.844	.874	.765	.
To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumni improved reasoning capacity level compared to capabilities of your students who did not undergo NS program?	2.71	.685	.874	.765	.

5.5.6 Teachers' Views on Students Disciplinary Level

In the teachers' view on the students' disciplinary level, there were four items, which were used to assess the teachers' opinions about the influence of the NS programme on the disciplinary level of the students in their first year. The reliability test analysis for these variables was conducted. As shown in table 5.53 below, the overall Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.930, which is more than the threshold value of 0.35. The results show a higher level of reliability and therefore, strong internal consistency of the data among the four items of teachers, about the disciplinary level of their students after completing the NS programme.

Table 5.053: Reliability statistics for the teachers' views on the discipline level of NS students as compared to non-NS students.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.788	4

Then again, the following table 5.54 shows the Item-Total Statistics of the two parameters for analysing the reliability of “teachers’ views about the influence of NS in students’ disciplinary level” data. Based on the results obtained from the assessment of the Corrected Item-Total Correlation in the following table 5.54, the items have strong Correlation between the items because their correlational indices are all higher than 0.3 as they have the value ranging from 0.374 and 0.607. Furthermore, the value of the Cronbach’s Alpha when the item is deleted as demonstrated in the table below should all remain the same because the overall value of the Cronbach’s Alpha can only significantly decrease when all the four items were deleted. The inference drawn from this analysis is that the four items regarding the teachers’ perceptions about the influence of NS programme in the discipline level of students are valid, reliable and have sufficient internal consistency to be used for further inferential statistical analysis.

Table 5.054: Item-Total Statistics for teachers' perceptions about the influence NS programme on the disciplinary level of students.

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
How do you compare the discipline level of NS Alumni to non-NS alumni students?	11.58	2.589	.303	.374	.858
What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?	10.65	1.848	.650	.581	.707
What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among non-NS students?	10.61	1.668	.720	.542	.667
Rate the overall discipline level of your NS students during their first year in college or higher education institution	10.58	1.980	.766	.607	.661

The third reliability test was conducted on data collected from the parents with the following sets of variables: 1) the discipline variables and 2) student's attitude variables. The discipline variables have three items which include comparing discipline level before and after the NS programme, student's commitment to studies, and overall discipline level after the NS

programme. The student's attitude variables had four items, which include the level of self-confidence in the course they are taking at the university, level of satisfaction with the teaching methods, level of satisfaction with the assessment methods and overall level of confidence in the programmes undertaken in the university.

5.5.7 Parents' Views on Student's Discipline Level

In the parents' view on the students' disciplinary level, the reliability test analysis for these variables was conducted. As shown in table 5.55 below, the overall Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.941, which significantly exceeds the threshold value of 0.35. The results depict a higher reliability level, and hence the data has strong internal consistency among the three items of parents' views about the discipline of their sons after completing NS programmes.

Table 5.055: Reliability statistics for the parents' views on the discipline level of NS students.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.941	3

The following table 5.56 presents the Item-Total Statistics of the two parameters used in the analysis of the reliability of "parents' views about the influence of NS in their sons' disciplinary level" data. The assessment of Corrected Item-Total Correlation shows strong Correlation among the three items. Their correlational indices are more than the threshold value of 0.3. The correlation indices have values ranging from 0.770 and 0.847. At the same time, the value of the Cronbach's Alpha when the item is deleted as depicted in table 5.56 below should all remain the same. When all the four items are deleted the overall value of the Cronbach's Alpha can only decrease with significant value. Therefore, we can conclude that the three items

describing the parents' views about the influence of the NS programme in the discipline level of students meet the reliability requirements essential to conduct inferential statistical analysis.

Table 05.56: Item-Total Statistics for parents' views about the influence NS programme on the disciplinary level of students.

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
How do you compare the discipline level of your son before and after being an NS alumnus?	7.41	1.653	.921	.847	.891
How committed is your son to his studies?	7.37	1.454	.864	.770	.928
Rate the change in overall discipline level of your son after the NS programme	7.38	1.513	.863	.771	.925

5.5.8 Reliability Test for Parents' Views on Students Attitude

The reliability test analysis for the four items describing the parents' views about their sons' attitude towards degree courses they are taking, teaching and assessment methods was conducted, and the results were presented in table 5.57. The overall Cronbach's Alpha (α) was 0.743, and the value is significantly larger than the threshold value of 0.35. The results show a higher level of reliability and strong internal consistency of the data among the four items of parents' views on the students' attitudes towards the degree courses they are taking, teaching and assessment methods.

Table 5.57: Reliability statistics for the parents' views on the attitude of their sons towards their degree courses, teaching and assessment methods.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.743	4

The results of the Item-Total Statistics of the two parameters to analyse the reliability of “parents’ views about their sons’ attitude” data is presented. From the results, the items have strong Correlation between the four items because their correlational indices are more than 0.3 as they have the values ranging between 0.352 to 0.720. Furthermore, the value of the Cronbach’s Alpha when the item is deleted, as illustrated in table 5.58 below, should all remain the same. This is because the overall value of the Cronbach’s Alpha can only have a significant decrease in value when all the four items were deleted. It can be concluded that the four items describing the parents’ views about the influence of the NS programme in the attitude of students on the courses they are undertaking are sufficiently reliable for further inferential statistical analysis.

Table 05.58: Item-Total Statistics for Parents' views about the influence NS programme on their sons' attitudes in the degree courses they are taking in the university.

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution?	10.99	3.381	.099	.352	.908
How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution?	11.95	2.141	.836	.714	.509
What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations ?	11.84	2.250	.725	.720	.574
Rate overall confidence level of NS students on the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution.	11.83	2.333	.631	.710	.628

5.6 Correlation Analysis

According to the illustrations given by researchers such as Tabachnick and Fidell (2010) and Hair et al. (2006), correlation analysis is an inferential statistical analysis method used to assess the strength of the relationship between two or more variables. In the context of inferential statistical context, the dependence of the variables is analysed by establishing the relationship between two sets of data or two random variables. Concerning such analysis,

Cooper and Schindler (2014) explain that correlation refers to a given broad class of statistical relationship, involving the dependence of the variables. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient also referred to as "Pearson's Correlation" is the most common inferential tool for measuring the dependence between two or more quantities (Hair et al., 2006).

In the same context, Tabachnick and Fidell (2010) and Hair et al. (2006) elucidate that Pearson's Correlation is achieved by dividing the covariance of two variables by the product of their standard deviations. The key result of the correlational analysis is called the correlation coefficient, which is denoted by letter "r", the value of which ranges from -1.0 to +1.0. When the value of r is closer to -1.0 or +1.0, then the two variables being analysed are closely related (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2010; and Hair et al., 2006). Nevertheless, if the value of r leans to 0, then it shows weak or no relationship between the variables being analysed (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2010). A positive value of r indicates that the relationship between the two variables is such that when one variable gets larger, the other variable also correspondingly gets larger.

On the other hand, a negative value of r indicates that the relationship between the two variables is such that when one variable leans to a smaller value, the other one correspondingly tends to be a more considerable value (Hair et al., 2006). In this case, the kind of relationship between the variables is referred to as an inverse correlation. The strength of the correlation coefficient values is shown in the following table.

Table 5.059: Demonstration of the strength of coefficient value based on explanations given by Cooper and Schindler (2014) and Hair et al. (2006).

Range of r	Strength of Correlation
$0.00 < r < 0.2$	Weak
$0.2 < r < 0.4$	Moderately weak
$0.4 < r < 0.6$	Moderate
$0.6 < r < 0.8$	Moderately strong
$r > 0.8$	Strong

5.7 Linear Regression Analysis

As illustrated by Verma (2013), the regression model analysis is one of the inferential statistical methods used to estimate the value of the dependent variable based on one or more independent variables. In other words, regression analysis is used in estimating the extent to which change in one or more independent variables affects the change in the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2006). When the estimation of the effects involves more than one independent variables against a dependent variable, a multiple regression analysis methodologies are used (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2010).

Multiple regression approach is an essential statistical tool, which is applied for quantitative analysis that involves the management and behaviour of research works. As explained by researchers such as Cooper and Schindler (2014), and Verma (2013), there are

numerous situations where multiple regression approach can be applied in order to use the result for informed decision-making processes such as policy-making processes. During multiple regression analysis, the efficiency of estimation measured as R-Squared is an essential value because it is the square of multiple correlations and determines whether the independent variable(s) involved significantly affect the dependent variable (Verma, 2013). During the NS, students achieved various personal development and behavioural maturities such as discipline, attitude or perception about the world and decision-making processes. It is predicted that this personal development and behavioural maturity factors achieved during the NS program affect the academic performance of the students.

5.8 Objective 1: Influence of NS Skills on Discipline Level

The first objective of this research study was to assess the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service and the influence on the level of discipline among the alumni while in higher learning institutions. Correlational analysis was conducted on the data collected from the parents to assess the correlation of the relationship between skills learnt during NS and the discipline level of the students. Regression analysis was conducted on the student's data to check if the NS skills had a statistically significant impact on the discipline level of the students

5.8.1 Influence of NS Skills on Discipline-Based on Students' Data

This regression model analysis was conducted to determine if attending NS programme and the experiential and learning skills attained at NS influenced the discipline level of university students. The independent variables are improvement level of responsibility to the student's duties, improvement in real-world skills, improvement in self-understanding, and improvement in the understanding of national values. The dependent variable is the overall

discipline level of the students during their stay at the university. The regression results included a model summary table, ANOVA table and coefficients table as presented and discussed below.

In the following model summary table for the regression, the R-value is 0.804, which depicts a strong and positive relationship between the dependent variable, which is the overall discipline level of the students and independent variables, which include the NS programme attendant status of the students and the NS duration they attended and the four independent variables. The results further indicate that Adjusted R in the model summary is 0.646 that 64.6% of the total variation in the student's overall discipline can be explained using the experiential and learning skill variable. The results are shown in the following table 5.60 for the model summary.

Table 5.60: Model summary for overall discipline regression.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.804 ^a	.647	.646	.233
a. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?, What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after National service?, How has your self-understanding improved after NS?, How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?				

The second table of interest in the regression analysis is ANOVA represented in table 5.61, which depicts whether or not the relationship between the independent variables or predictors and the dependent variable is significant. The test was conducted at a 0.05 significance level. As demonstrated in the following table 5.30, experiential and learning skills gained from the NS programme has a statistically significant impact on the overall level of discipline among the college students, $F(4, 1838) = 842.369$, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. The skills students learnt from NS increased their level of discipline.

Table 5.61: ANOVA table showing the p-value for the students' discipline regression analysis

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	183.018	4	45.755	842.369	.000 ^b
	Residual	99.834	1838	.054		
	Total	282.852	1842			
a. Dependent Variable: Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution						
b. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?, What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?, How has your self-understanding improved after NS?, How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?						

The third regression table reports the coefficients of experiential and learning skills variables. Among the four variable, the students' improvement in the real-world skills significantly contributed to predicting the overall discipline level of the students, p (Sig.) < 0.001 . As demonstrated in the following table 5.62 below, the coefficients show no multicollinearity problem because the VIF values of each one of them lie within the accepted range of between 1 and 10 ($1 < \text{VIF} < 10$). Therefore, these results conclude that experiential and learning skills that the students obtain from the national service contribute towards improving their overall discipline level.

Table 05.62: Coefficients table generated from the students' attitude regression.

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.300	.078		3.852	.000		
	How has your self-understanding improved after NS?	.006	.011	.008	.548	.584	.927	1.078
	How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?	-.017	.018	-.020	-.911	.362	.402	2.489
	What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?	.909	.016	.801	56.950	.000	.971	1.030
	What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?	.025	.019	.028	1.274	.203	.406	2.463
a. Dependent Variable: Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution								

5.8.2 Correlation Test for the Student's Commitment Level

Pearson's Correlational analysis was conducted on the data to determine the relationship between the discipline level of the NS students and their attitude towards degree courses they are taking in the university. For the discipline level, the variable chosen was "parents' perception of their sons' commitment to their study". The four variables describing the attitude of students towards their studies were all chosen and compared against the discipline variable. The assessment was motivated by Lim (2018) through an argument that commitment to studies significantly relates with the students' attitudes towards the studies, which is linked to their informed decisions after experiential skills obtained in necessary services. The Pearson's Correlation analysis was conducted to determine if the level of discipline among the NS

students had a significant relationship with their attitude towards courses they take in the university, and the results are presented in table 5.63 below.

Table 5.063: Correlational analysis between discipline level of NS students and their attitudes towards their studies according to their parents.

Correlations						
		What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution?	How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution?	What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations?	Rate overall confidence level of NS students on the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution.	How committed is your son to his studies?
What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution?	Pearson Correlation	1	.294**	.051	-.059	-.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.604	.545	.545
	N	106	106	106	106	106
How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution?	Pearson Correlation	.294**	1	.771**	.730**	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106

What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations?	Pearson Correlation	.051	.771**	1	.803**	.803**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.604	.000		.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106
Rate overall confidence level of NS students on the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution.	Pearson Correlation	-.059	.730**	.803**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.545	.000	.000		.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106
How committed is your son to his studies?	Pearson Correlation	-.059	.730**	.803**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.545	.000	.000	.000	
	N	106	106	106	106	106
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

From table 5.63 above, there is no significant relationship between parents' perceptions about their sons' commitment to studies and influence of NS programme on their self-confidence in their studies based on the value of $r(106) = .690$, $p(.545) > .001$. There is a moderately strong relationship between parents' perceptions about their sons' commitment to studies and satisfaction level with teaching methods based on the value of $r(106) = .730$, $p < .001$. There is a strong relationship between parents' perceptions about their sons' commitment to studies and satisfaction level with the results of their assignments and examination based on the value of $r(106) = .803$, $p < .001$. Lastly, there is a moderately strong relationship between parents' perceptions about their sons' commitment to studies and their son's overall confidence level in the degree programmes they are studying in the university, $r(106) = 1.000$, $p < .001$. The results can be compared with the one obtained from the relationship between teachers' perception of NS students' discipline and their attitudes towards degree

programmes they are studying, to conclude that the NS programme instils discipline and moral values in students, hence their commitment to studies and compliance with the university rules. According to Taylor (2014), the commitment and positive attitudes towards studies are significantly related.

5.9 Objective 2: Influences of NS Skills on the Attitudes towards Constructive Feedback

The second objective of this study was to explore the effects of participating in the national service program on the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback. Correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between skills and attitudes of university students towards constructive feedback. Multiple linear regression was conducted to assess the influence of NS skills on the attitude of the students towards constructive feedback.

5.9.1 Influence of NS Skills on Attitude towards Assignment Feedback

Regression analysis was conducted to assess how the experiential and learning skills students obtained from NS training influenced their attitudes towards the assignments they are given in classes they attend. The independent variables were improvement level of student's responsibility towards their duties, improvement in real-world skills, improvement in student's self-understanding, and improvement in the student's understanding of national values. The dependent variable is the satisfaction level of the students towards the assignment results. From the summary model table 5.64 below, the relationship between NS skills and student's attitudes towards assignment results are positive and strong, $R = 0.774$. The value of Adjusted R Square = .595 shows that 59.5% of the variances of independent variables are described by the variances of the dependent variable, which is above average and desirable.

Table 5.064: Model summary for assignment satisfaction regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.772 ^a	.596	.595	.253
a. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?				

The ANOVA table for the regression model assesses the significance level of the impact at 0.05 alpha value. As shown in the table 5.65 below, there is a statistically significant effect of NS skills on the student attitudes towards the assignment results, $F(4, 1838) = 677.827$, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. The results also showed that the data fitted with the linear regression model, meaning it was suitable for the analysis.

Table 5.065: ANOVA table for attitudes towards assignment results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	172.939	4	43.235	677.827	.000 ^b
	Residual	117.236	1838	.064		
	Total	290.175	1842			
a. Dependent Variable: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?						
b. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?						

The third table reports the coefficients of the independent variable. Apart from the improvement in self-understanding, the other three independent variables significantly contributed to predicting the attitude of the students towards assignment results, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. As demonstrated in the following table 5.66 below, the coefficients show no multicollinearity

problem because the VIF values of each one of them lie within the accepted range of between 1 and 10 ($1 < \text{VIF} < 10$). Therefore, these results conclude that experiential and learning skills that the students obtain from the national service influence their attitudes towards improving assignments results they receive.

Table 05.66: Coefficients of assignment results regression

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.333	.084		3.946	.000		
	How has your self-understanding improved after NS?	.020	.012	.024	1.587	.113	.927	1.078
	How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?	.214	.020	.250	10.669	.000	.402	2.489
	What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?	.877	.017	.763	50.707	.000	.971	1.030
	What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?	-.192	.021	-.211	-9.084	.000	.406	2.463
a. Dependent Variable: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?								

5.9.2 Influence of NS Skills on Attitude towards Exam Feedback

Another regression model was developed to assess the influence of experiential and learning skills students obtained from NS training affect their attitudes towards the exam results. The predictors were level of improvement of student's responsibility towards their duties, level of improvement in real-world skills, improvement in student's self-understanding, and improvement in the student's understanding of national values. The response variable for this model is the students' satisfaction with the exam results. In the summary model 5.67 below, the relationship between NS skills and student's attitudes towards exams results are positive and

strong, $R = 0.989$. The value of Adjusted R Square = .977 shows that 97.7% of the variances of the dependent variable are described by the variances of the independent variables, which is highly strong.

Table 5.67: Model summary for exams satisfaction regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.989 ^a	.977	.977	.052
a. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?				

The ANOVA table for the regression model assesses the significance level of the impact at 0.05 alpha value. As shown in the table 5.68 below, there is a statistically significant effect of NS skills on the attitudes of the students towards the exam results, $F(4, 1838) = 19790.192$, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. The results also showed that the data was fit for the linear regression model.

Table 5.68: ANOVA table for attitudes towards exam results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	211.923	4	52.981	19790.192	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.921	1838	.003		
	Total	216.843	1842			
a. Dependent Variable: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?						
b. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?						

The third table reports the coefficients of predictor variables—students' improvement in real-world skills. As a result, the NS training contributed significantly towards their attitudes about their exam results, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. As established in the next table 5.69, the coefficients do not have multicollinearity issues based on the fact that the VIF values are within the accepted

range of between 1 and 10 ($1 < \text{VIF} < 10$). Therefore, these results conclude that the experiential and learning skills obtain by the students from the national service influence their attitudes towards exam results they receive.

Table 5.69: Coefficients of assignment results regression

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.067	.017		3.853	.000		
	How has your self-understanding improved after NS?	-.001	.003	-.001	-.368	.713	.927	1.078
	How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?	.000	.004	.000	-.028	.978	.402	2.489
	What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?	.981	.004	.988	277.075	.000	.971	1.030
	What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?	.003	.004	.004	.704	.482	.406	2.463
a. Dependent Variable: What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?								

5.9.3 Relationship between Discipline and Attitude

The discipline level of the students in the way they comply with the university regulations and academic requirements closely relate to their attitude towards the courses they are taking (Moely and Ilustre, 2011; and Lim, 2018). For that matter, Pearson's Correlation was conducted for the discipline level based on the rate (%) of their lecture attendance of the NS alumni in the university against their attitude towards the courses and teaching methods in the university. Four variables for students' attitude for this analysis included the influence of the

NS programme on student's self-confidence, satisfaction level of the NS alumni with teaching methods at the university, satisfaction level with the results they get from assignments and examinations compared to non-NS students, and rate of the overall confidence level of the NS students with teaching and assessment methods. The correlation analysis was conducted to determine if the level of discipline among the NS students was significantly correlated to their attitude towards courses they take in the university, teaching and assessment methods with results presented below.

As illustrated in table 5.70, the correlation between the rate (%) of lecture attendance and influence of the NS programme on the self-confidence of the student in the courses they undertake is moderately strong with positive and sufficient value of $r(106) = .690, p < .001$. Therefore, the rate (%) of lecture attendance significantly relates to their self-confidence level. The correlation between the rate (%) of lecture attendance and satisfaction level with the teaching methods is moderately strong with a positive and sufficient value of $r(106) = .706, p < .001$. Subsequently, the rate (%) of lecture attendance has a significant relationship with the students' satisfaction level with the teaching methods. The correlation between the rate (%) of lecture attendance and level of satisfaction of NS students with the results of assignments and examinations compared to a non-NS student is moderately strong with a positive and sufficient value of $r(106) = .659, p < .001$. Therefore, the rate (%) of lecture attendance significantly relates to their satisfaction level with the results of the assignments and examinations compared to non-NS students. The correlation between the rate (%) of lecture attendance and rate of overall confidence of students in teaching and assessment methods is moderate with a positive and sufficient value of $r(106) = .584, p < .001$. Consequently, the rate (%) of lecture attendance has a significant relationship with the overall rate of students' confidence in teaching and assessment methods offered by the lecturers.

Table 5.070: Correlational analysis between discipline level of NS students and their attitudes towards the courses they take in the university, teaching and assessment methods.

Correlations						
		What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?	How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?	In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?	Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college or higher education institution.	What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?
What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?	Pearson Correlation	1	.706**	.925**	.871**	.690**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106
How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?	Pearson Correlation	.706**	1	.670**	.608**	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106
In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with	Pearson Correlation	.925**	.670**	1	.825**	.659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000

the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?	N	106	106	106	106	106
Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college or higher education institution.	Pearson Correlation	.871**	.608**	.825**	1	.584**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106
What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?	Pearson Correlation	.690**	.706**	.659**	.584**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	106	106	106	106	106
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

The results are supported by the argument posited by Kuh et al. (2008), that the reason for participating in the NS programme is to shape the disciplinary behaviour, attitudes and hence the world views of young people in order to understand the society and participate positively through their career development and service provision. The high level of discipline attained during the NS programme sufficiently shape the attitudes and views of the young people about the world, which include their behaviour and attitude during their studies at higher learning institutions (Moely and Ilustre, 2011). Therefore, the results of the correlational analysis between the discipline level and attitude of students towards their courses, teaching and assessment methods.

5.10 Objective 3: Influence of NS Skills on Decision-Making and Academic Performance

The third objective of the study was to examine the influence of the candidate's participation in the national service program on their ability to make informed decisions on

occupational choices. Two regression model analyses were conducted to determine the influence of NS skills on decision making and academic performance.

5.10.1 Influence of NS Skills on Informed Decision-Making

It was necessary to assess the influence of the NS skills on the ability of the students to make informed decisions. Therefore, a regression model was conducted to assess if there is a significant influence of NS skills on the improvement of decision-making ability among the students. The independent variables included a level of improvement of student's responsibility towards their duties, level of improvement in real-world skills, improvement in student's self-understanding, and improvement in the student's understanding of national values. The dependent variable is the informed decision to choose the course currently undertaken in the university. The $R=.894$ means that there is a strong and positive relationship between the dependent variable and the four independent variables. The R Square values of .799 show that 79.9% of the total variances of the dependent variable can be explained using the four dependent variables, as illustrated in table 5.71 below.

Table 05.71: Model summary for exams satisfaction regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.894 ^a	.799	.799	.161
a. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?				

The ANOVA results in table 5.72 below, provide the significance of the regression test and whether the model was fit for analysis. At a significance level of 0.05, the influence of NS skills on the ability of the students to make an informed decision is statistically significant, F

(4, 1838) = 1830.368.192, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. Furthermore, the significant level of the results showed that the regression model was fit for the analysis.

Table 05.72: ANOVA table for attitudes towards exam results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	189.438	4	47.360	1830.368	.000 ^b
	Residual	47.557	1838	.026		
	Total	236.995	1842			
a. Dependent Variable: What was the basis of your choice of course?						
b. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?						

The next table reports the coefficients of independent variables—students' improvement in real-world skills. As a result, the skills of students attending the NS contributed significantly towards their attitudes and improved decision-making ability, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. On the other hand, the coefficients do not report multicollinearity because VIF values were within the accepted range ($1 < \text{VIF} < 10$). Therefore, these results conclude that experiential and learning skills obtained by students from the national service influence their ability to make an informed decision on the choice of their courses at the university.

Table 5.73: Coefficients of assignment results regression

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.320	.054		5.944	.000		
	How has your self-understanding improved after NS?	-.004	.008	-.006	-.548	.584	.927	1.078
	How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?	-.009	.013	-.012	-.739	.460	.402	2.489
	What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?	.929	.011	.894	84.321	.000	.971	1.030
	What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?	.007	.013	.008	.509	.611	.406	2.463
a. Dependent Variable: What was the basis of your choice of course?								

5.10.2 Influence of NS Skills on Academic Performance

In order to examine the influence of NS skills of the students on their overall academic performance, regression analysis assesses the influence of experiential and learning skills that the students received from NS training and their influence on academic performance. The independent variables were level of improvement of student's responsibility towards their duties, improvement level of students in real-world skills, level of improvement in student's self-understanding, and improvement in the student's understanding of national values. The response variable for this model is the students' overall academic performance. In the summary model 5.74 below, the relationship between NS skills and student's attitudes towards exams results are positive and strong, $R = 0.838$. The value of Adjusted R Square = .702 shows that 70.2% of the variances of the dependent variable are described by the variances of the independent variables, which is very strong.

Table 5.74: Model summary for overall academic performance

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.838 ^a	.702	.702	.285
a. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?				

The ANOVA table for the regression model measures the significance level of the impact at 0.05 alpha value. As shown in the table 5.75 below, there is a statistically significant effect of NS skills on the overall academic performance of the students, $F(4, 1838) = 1083.457$, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. The results demonstrated that data was fit for the linear regression model.

Table 5.075: ANOVA table for attitudes towards exam results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	351.841	4	87.960	1083.457	.000 ^b
	Residual	149.218	1838	.081		
	Total	501.059	1842			
a. Dependent Variable: Rate your overall academic performance in college/university						
b. Predictors: (Constant), What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties? What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS? How has your self-understanding improved after NS? How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?						

The third table reports the coefficients of predictor variables. Improvement level of student's understanding of the national values and responsibility towards their duties had a significant contribution to the academic performance of the students, $p(\text{Sig.}) < 0.001$. As presented in table 5.76, the coefficients do not have multicollinearity issues based on the fact that the VIF values are within the range of between 1 and 10 ($1 < \text{VIF} < 10$). Therefore, these results conclude that experiential and learning skills that students obtain from the national service influence their academic performance higher learning institutions.

Table 5.076: Coefficients of assignment results regression

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.121	.095		-1.271	.204		
	How has your self-understanding improved after NS?	.015	.014	.014	1.077	.282	.927	1.078
	How has your understanding of the national values improved after NS?	.068	.023	.060	3.006	.003	.402	2.489
	What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after NS?	.010	.020	.007	.513	.608	.971	1.030
	What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?	.937	.024	.787	39.372	.000	.406	2.463
a. Dependent Variable: Rate your overall academic performance in college/university								

Apart from the numerical data, there are open-ended questions that collected views of students, teachers and parents about NS and how it influences students' in higher learning institutions. According to Creswell and Clark (2017), qualitative data refers to the kind of non-numerical data or information used and collected to assess the divergent views of the participants about the subject being studied. In qualitative data, the information provided by the respondents provides more depth and details into the issues being discussed in the study because they are characterised by open-ended questions that do not restrict the views and responses given by the study participants (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002). Qualitative data helps in looking into the research problem more in-depth than just analysis of rank and count data by helping in recording attitudes, feelings and behaviour of the respondents about the subject matter (Creswell and Clark, 2017). According to Ritchie and Spencer (2002), qualitative data enhances the sense of openness by encouraging respondents to expand on their responses with the aim of opening up to new areas of the topic that might not have been considered initially.

5.11 Students' Views about Influence of NS Programme

For the qualitative data, there were two questions for students: 1) “In your own words, describe in the following box using three sentences your view about the importance of NS in shaping your college and university academic performance.” and 2) “In three sentences, describe in your own words, the steps you followed in choosing the degree you are doing at college or higher education institution.” For the first question, there were divergent views from the 1843 students regarding the importance of NS in shaping their college and university academic performance. However, their views were categorised into three themes: 1) experiential skills, 2) knowledge about the nation and 3) discipline. Students explained the significance of the NS programme in improving their experiential skills. Through the skills, they could make informed decisions regarding the courses they were taking in the university based on their abilities, which they discovered upon being exposed to practical challenges.

Students explained that the significance of the NS program in their academic performance and the motivation towards their understanding of the national values, culture, social, political and economic aspects during their time in the programme. *“Having learnt military skills and the need to uphold our national values, I realised that identifying my career field was informed by my desire to remain patriotic and provide essential services to society.”* Because of this understanding of the nation, they were able to make informed decisions regarding the program they would take in the university and hence their career path development. For the students in the third category, they pointed at training on a high level of discipline in the NS programme, and they believe that this instilled the hardworking behaviour and adherence to the university rules. *“My time in the NS programme was tight, but I believed that hard work and determination to achieve desired goals is important if one is to succeed. I adopt the same philosophy in my studies, and I do better than I did in high school.”* Said one of them. As a result, they believed their improved academic performance was influenced by the

strict discipline, understanding of the national values, cultures and hard work, based on the way they were nurtured to practice while in the NS programme.

Regarding the question on the processes, students were queried on the choice of degree courses they were taking in the university; the data responses were categorised into two: 1) advice-based process and 2) knowledge-based process. Under the advice-based process for choosing the degree courses, the respondents gave various explanations. Some of them explained that their parents played a more significant role in choosing their courses, although they did not link it to the NS programme. *“My parents always support every endeavour I pursue to succeed in life.”* One student responded. Others chose the courses based on their popularity in the job market while others chose them based on the complexity levels. In the second category, respondents explained that their choices for the degree courses they were taking at the university were based on their informed knowledge about their dream career and based on their abilities influenced by their experiences at NS programme. One respondent said, *“With experience, I had during the NS programme, I knew that studying social sciences was a stepping stone towards my desire to help in the social and economic development of communities.”* They believe that the exposure to the practice experiences contributed significantly towards their informed decisions on the choices of the courses they were taking at the university.

5.12 Teachers’ Views about NS Programme

There were two questions in the questionnaire form, which targeted to collect qualitative data from the teachers: 1) what is your understanding of the meaning of NS (National Service)? Explain in 2 to 3 sentences, and 2) in your own words, describe in the following box using three sentences your view about the importance of the NS in shaping the academic performance of your students. In this context, the researcher allowed the teachers to give their divergent views about the study topic. The answers given by the teachers to the first question were categorised

into two major themes: 1) teachers understanding of NS programme and 2) teachers lack understanding of the NS programme. The answers given by the teachers to the second question were categorised into two themes: 1) views based on the knowledge of the teachers about NS programme, 2) views based on the experience of the teachers with students.

Majority of the teachers in the university knew about the NS programme in the country. However, they had different definitions in terms of its contribution to the academic performance of university students. According to one of the respondents, *“National Service programme, although involves a military training for post-secondary school males, it instils cultural and social values, loyalty to the country and spirit of sacrifice to defend the country’s socio-economic, religious and cultural achievement.”* The response of the participant seems to be supported by Lim (2018) arguing that the NS programme directly addresses the morality of the young people as they learn national values, patriotism and religious principles. Positivity is one of the critical elements pointed out by the majority of the respondents. Although responses deviate in this context, categorisation shows that majority of the teachers point at *“positive orientation of students during training”* as the contributing factor of high moral codes and understanding of the society. The observation is supported by Barany (2018) who argue that the NS programme helps young people to develop positive orientation, perceptions and therefore creates moral, upright young people. Consequently, one of the teachers stated, *“When high morality and positive perceptions are applied to academic work, a student is likely to dedicate his time to the studies and perform better.”* Thus, positive orientation, perception and appreciation of national values give NS alumni more meaning to study hard and become responsible citizens (Eisenberg et al., 2016).

Teachers who had limited understanding of the contribution of NS programme on academic performance also believed that it is a programme in *“shaping the behaviour,*

perception and self-worth of the students, and this influences their future in terms of what they need.” The observation is supported by Taylor (2014), arguing that national training services the world over have been significantly producing an improved sense of self-worth and self-esteem among alumni. Thus, a high level of confidence in oneself is highly likely to improve their performance in higher education level. One of the respondents argued, *“I don’t know much about the contribution of NS programme to academic performance in the country, but what I know is that it increases job opportunity and career development for alumni.”* The observation can be viewed from the fact that the government of the UAE considers NS alumni first for job opportunities (Lim, 2018). They have high chances of furthering their education in military fields to fulfil their obligation of defending their country.

Some teachers also had a strong belief that the NS programme contributes to success in academic performance and career development. One of the teachers pointed out, *“When students complete secondary school, their experience about life is limited to bookwork, school rules and regulations with limited knowledge about the outside world. I believe the NS programme exposes them to real-world challenges. Thus, they develop new behaviour, experience, perceptions and skills that can help them succeed in academic work in a higher learning institution and career development because they know what they want in life.”* During the training sessions at the NS programme, students are exposed to practical life scenarios and problems where they can use their senses and skills to respond to challenges (Schoepp and Danaher, 2016; and Eyler et al., 2001). The argument pointed out by the participant also conforms to Pancer et al. (2000)’s argument that because higher learning education focusses on the development of human capital, national service contributes towards the production of well-rounded graduates with both academic knowledge and practical skills to address daily challenges.

Teachers believed that the NS programme prepares students to face practical challenges and issues in the society, and therefore assist them in making informed decisions. One teacher said, *“From my past four years’ experience in this university, NS alumni tend to be more disciplined, organised and demonstrate the spirit of hard work. Generally, they perform better due to these good characters.”* This context is supported by Lim (2018)’s argument that NS programme reorients behaviour, attitude, practical experience and skills necessary to make informed decisions about career choice and an individual’s responsibility to the country. These findings are further supported by different studies that mandatory services influence attitudes, behaviour and commitments of the alumni to their studies in higher learning education (Moely and Ilustre, 2011; Taylor, 2014; and Eyler et al., 2001).

5.13 Summary of Chapter

This chapter was used to analyse the data collected from the study participants, which included male university students, teachers and parents. The analysis included quantitative and qualitative approaches. The response of all participants was 60 percent, which was sufficient for the study. For the qualitative analysis, descriptive statistics were used to analyse all the question items used for inferential statistical analysis and the demographic information of the three categories of participants, respectively. The descriptive analysis of all question items used to conduct the inferential statistical analysis showed that attending national service had positive improvement in the discipline level, commitment to responsibilities, experiential skills, informed decision-making ability and hence positive academic development in higher learning institutions. Cronbach’s Alpha analysis was conducted to determine if the questionnaire tools used were valid and reliable for data collections. The results showed that all the three questionnaire forms were reliable and valid with Cronbach’s Alpha of more than the threshold value of 0.35 in each case. The correlational analysis using Pearson’s Product Moment

demonstrated a significant relationship between attending NS programmes and commitment to responsibilities. There was also a significant relationship between discipline and attitudes towards constructive feedback and hence academic development of students in the higher learning institutions. Regression model analysis showed that the NS programme had significant effects on the discipline level, attitude towards constructive assignment results, exam results and confidence in the courses undertaken in the institutions as well and informed decision-making abilities. The results were supported by the qualitative data collected through open-ended questions from the students and teachers, where both teachers and students who responded agreed that attending national service programme had positive improvement in their discipline, commitment to classwork and academic development.

Chapter 6

Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter 5 has presented the results for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the primary data collected from the three sample studies: university students, teachers and parents of the students. By analysing the data, the researcher aimed at answering the research questions as a way of addressing the study topic and achieving the study objectives (Creswell et al., 2003). The first objective was to assess the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influences the level of discipline among the alumni while attending higher learning institutions. The second objective of the study was to explore the effects of participating in the national service program on the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback. The third objective was to examine the influence of the candidate's participation in the national service program on their ability to make informed decisions on their occupational choices

6.2 National Service Skills and their Influence on a Student's Disciplinary level

The first sub-research question was *“What are the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influence on a student's disciplinary level and non-academic activities in universities?”* It corresponded with the first specific objective, which was to assess the experiential and learning skills taught at the national service that influences the level of discipline among the alumni while attending higher learning institutions. To achieve this objective, the first research question was answered using the thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected using open-ended questions, descriptive, correlation analysis and regression analysis of the quantitative data. From the responses given by the participants who filled the questionnaire forms, it was revealed that the NS programme exposes the students to real-world

challenges and provide with experiential skills to avert the challenges. Their discipline level improves because of the new behaviour, perceptions and experience they acquire during the training. From the descriptive statistics of the students' data, 72.3% of the students who attended the NS programme believed that it had improved their reasoning capacity and hence, discipline. The correlational analysis of data from the teachers, students and parents disclosed a positive relationship between NS status and the discipline level of students. Regression analysis showed that attending the NS programme had a significant effect on the level of discipline of students. Thus, the findings showed that attending the NS programme improves the disciplinary level of university students.

These findings provide a specific pattern that can be used to provide general inference for the study population. Therefore, from the general viewpoint and based on the research findings, it can be argued that attending national service increases the level of discipline among the students in their higher learning education. Discipline is the practice of teaching people to obey the rules and code of behaviour in a given context. Lim (2018) explains that students are trained to obey codes of regulations when they are attending the national service program. They internalise these practices and adopt them in their personal life after the NS training. Therefore, when they join the higher learning institutions, students maintain high levels of discipline through consistent adherence to the rules and regulations guarding the conducts of students within the higher learning institutions. Through the understanding of national values and culture, the NS alumni learn moral codes that contribute significantly to their level of discipline after the programme (Barany, 2018). Since indiscipline is an initiated behaviour, Eisenberg et al. (2016) argue that it is right for the government to use national service as a countermeasure to initiate discipline and morality among young people. Thus, apart from the military drafting to increase the security within the border of the UAE, the experience and learning skills

acquired during the training contributes to overall discipline of the young people, which is essential in academic performance and career development.

6.3 National Service Skills and their Influence on Student Attitudes towards Constructive Feedback

The second sub-research question was *“How does participation in the national service program influence students’ attitudes toward constructive feedback?”* The corresponding research objective was to explore the effects of participating in the national service program on the attitudes of college and university students towards constructive feedback. The term “constructive feedback” was used in this study to refer to the teachers’ feedback for students’ performance in learning processes, homework, assessment tests and examinations (Schoepp and Danaher, 2016). From the qualitative data analysis, it was demonstrated that attending the NS programme results in positive orientation and self-esteem, which contributes to positive attitudes towards teaching and assessment processes. Correlational analysis conducted on data from students and teachers presented a strong relationship between the students’ NS status and attitude towards academic programmes in schools. Regression analysis conducted on data from students and teachers showed that the NS status of students had statistically significant effects on the attitudes of the students towards academic programmes or courses they take in the university.

The results had similar patterns and therefore can be applied to the entire population of the students by making an inference that participating in the NS programme has a positive influence on the student’s attitudes towards academic programmes and courses they take in the university, hence positive attitudes towards constructive feedback from teachers. According to Torun and Tumen (2016), success in education goes beyond reading books to the divergent skills, experience and knowledge derived from doing practical things. When solving practical

problems, many challenges emerge, and as a person finds solutions to such challenges, they understand the need for assessment and feedback reviewing their performance. As Barany (2018) explains, young people enrolled in the national service and exposed to real-world challenges use experiential and learning skills to solve the same. These include military training, response to community needs and fulfilment of a fundamental obligation, and each of these tasks poses challenges. Thus, they have to be done under proper management and monitoring. Consequently, students learn to appreciate when they are corrected and improve by reviewing their previous mistakes (Pancer et al., 2000).

6.4 National Service Skills and their Influences on Decision-Making and Academic Performance

The third sub-research question was *“To what extent does the candidate’s participation in the national service program influence his/her ability to make informed decisions on occupational choices, academic performance and career development?”* The corresponding objective was to examine the influence of the candidate participation in the national service program on their ability to make informed decisions on occupational choices. Occupation choice is determined by the course taken in the university while career development is determined by how well the student excels academically in the course of choice. Thus, the third sub-research question tends to assess the influence of the NS skills on occupational choice and academic performance of the student. The qualitative analysis showed that the NS skills instil new behaviour, perceptions and moral codes in students, hence improving their decision-making processes and academic performance. The regression model analysis conducted on students’ data showed a statistically significant influence of experiential and learning skills on the decision-making process and academic performance.

The results provided a similar pattern of results, which, according to Creswell and Clark (2017), can be generalised for the students' population considering the large sample size. One of the essential undertakings in the life of young people is the choice of their career. According to Lim (2018), students who attended the NS programme are more likely to make informed decisions on key undertakings in their life. During the national service programme, students are exposed to many things during military conscription as revealed by Alterman and Balboni (2017) in their review of the UAE national service programme. The NS training programme includes attitude adjustment, relationships, physical training, military training, specialised and applied training, theoretical courses and reserve duties. These skills have a significant influence on the decision-making and informed choice of the degree course that the student wants to undertake. For instance, specialised and applied training at the NS is born out of the talent that subsequently influences the course choice at the university (Alterman and Balboni, 2017). When a degree course is chosen based on talent, passion and potential, the student is likely to have better performance as opposed to when other factors influence the decision.

6.5 Theoretical Link with the Study Results

The study was grounded on four key theories that were relevant in understanding the research topic. These included experimental learning theory, symbolic interactionism, transformative learning theory, and social learning theory. National service is a learning programme that provides post-secondary young people with an opportunity to learn soft skills and develop behavioural maturity. The learning processes and outcomes are linked with the theories that explain the same.

6.5.1 Linking Study Findings with Experiential Learning Theory

The national service programme exposed young people to a different environment from the one they were used to in order to learn soft skills and develop behavioural maturity as young

adults whose future is essential for the country. The experiential learning theory was developed to give a holistic approach in the learning processes for adult development through transformative approach (Kolb, 2014). The programme, as demonstrated in the results, changes the character and perception of the learners about society. From the perspective of the experiential learning theory, the national service establishes a learning environment where knowledge is imparted on students through the transformation of learners' experience. The results analysed in the previous chapter shows that majority of students who attended the national service programme recorded positive change in the discipline level, commitment to duties, self-confidence, attitudes towards constructive feedback and behavioural maturity. The improvement in skills, perception and behavioural changes were achieved by transforming the students' experience through exposure to a different environment and learning conditions.

6.5.2 Linking Study Results with Symbolic Interactionism

The theory of symbolic interactionism posits that regular interaction has self-conceptualisation, leading to the assumption that the actions and beliefs of people depend on the symbolic interaction (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003). One of the training courses at the national service, as explained in chapter 2 under curriculum design is the development of relationships in a diverse environment through interactions. Trainees are given time to interact with each other and share their personal experiences and diversities as part of the learning process. The objective of this approach is to model their behaviour and attitudes towards a diverse environment and to change their thought process and understanding of society. As a result, they develop positive attitudes towards constructive feedback. At the same time, they discover themselves through interactive learning, and this informs their career based on their abilities, skills and talents. According to Furseth (2016), symbolic interactionism explains how learners rely on the fundamental values of their societies to influence their actions, skill

development and behaviour. This explains why the national service programme emphasises on the learner's understanding of the national values, social, political and religious principles to help shape their discipline level, commitment, attitudes towards constructive feedback and informed decision-making process.

6.5.3 Linking the Results with Transformative Learning Theory

The transformative learning theory posits that during learning, thought processes are changed through disorientation by encouraging the students to use critical thinking by questioning and interrogating situation to get answers (Taylor and Cranton, 2012). The ability to challenge the thought process of learners at the national service explains why the majority of the respondents in the study reported that the service improved the students reasoning capacity. This means that they are able to challenge situations and interrogate them to find relevant answers before making informed decisions. As a result, the majority of the students were able to choose the right degree courses based on their skills, abilities and interest, as reported in the results. The transformative learning theory encourages critical reflection as a way for learners to develop an understanding of the challenging situations and their influences in their lives (Merriam, 2011). Through the critical thinking and reflection abilities gained during the national service, young people develop a positive attitude towards constructive feedback, which can be seen in the research findings above.

6.5.4 Linking the Results with Social Learning Theory

As developed by Bandura (1969), social learning theory explains that people learn from one another through observations, imitations and modelling. During the national service, students copy and observe different scenarios to gain soft skills, perception and behaviour change. Through social learning, students develop a better understanding of the national values, religious and cultural principle of the country. They become committed to their duties, as shown

in the study findings. Social learning also leads to self-discovery and hence change in discipline, being more responsible and having positive attitudes towards learning and corrections of individual mistakes. Being a social learning environment, the national service programme improves skills, perception and behavioural attitudes of the young people so that they can cope with the challenges and succeed in their undertakings such as academic work. As shown in the results, majority of the students have improved experiential skills, positive perceptions, attitudes and decision-making processes because the social learning environment at the national service programme allows them to learn from each other and from the national service leader.

6.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a discussing where the study results are tied with the content from the literature review and study context. The discussions show that attending national service programme has a positive influence on the discipline level of alumni, attitudes towards learning and receiving constructive feedback that can criticise or applaud their performance, and ability to make informed decisions based on the improved behaviour, commitment and perception about the world. Based on the document developed by Alterman and Balboni (2017) illustrating the overall goal of the national service in the UAE, the goal is to improve national education, develop a strong workforce, improve public health services and respond to disasters more effectively. During the training, students are trained to embed the culture of sacrifice in their growing nationalism by using their talents, skills and potentials to improve their societies. These can be achieved through hard work and discipline among young people as they pursue a formal education in higher learning institutions. Through specialised training, the students become more committed to their course, and they are being prepared to learn and develop themselves through constructive feedback. Through the linkage of the national service curriculum design and deliverable with the four theories such as experiential learning theory, symbolic

interactionism, social learning theory and transformative learning theory, the discussion chapter has shown the influence of national service on the improvement of learners' soft skills, attitudes, commitment, discipline level and informed decision-making ability. These elements have been linked to better academic development in higher learning institutions. In this sense, the national service helps in identifying potential and talents of the young people so that they join courses that are aligned to their talents and ability, which eventually lead to excellent academic performance and career development.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the study that provides an overall conclusion for the study. It is created to help the target readers understand the importance of the research study after they have completed reading the paper. The chapter is not merely a summary of the critical aspects of the study topic as covered throughout the paper. However, it provides a brief synthesis of the critical points of the study topic to help in giving a clear roadmap for the future application and development of knowledge in the study context. The focus of the study was to determine the importance of the NS programme of the UAE in improving academic performance and career development of the students attending higher learning institutions. To serve its purpose, this chapter has been divided into five subsections. These are the introduction, summary, how the study has answered the research questions and the contribution of the research and recommendations.

7.2 Summary of the Research

This study was aimed at critically examining the influence of attending the NS programme among Emirati students on their academic development in higher learning institutions. The theories adopted to support the study included service-learning programmes, symbolic interactionism, transformative learning theory and social learning theories. The literature review of the previous works and documents showed that national service, community service and other relevant services across the world had a significant influence on the academic development of students in colleges and universities and hence career development. These aspects were reviewed in terms of GPA scores, extra-curricular activities, moral codes and

learning outcomes as well as self-esteem. To achieve this objective, the study used both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis.

Questionnaire forms designed differently for college students, teachers and parents were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. The questionnaire form designed for parents had closed-ended questions only to collect quantitative data. However, the questionnaire forms designed for students and teachers or lecturers contained both closed-ended scale questions to collect quantitative data and open-ended question to collect their views qualitatively. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis, and triangulation methods were used to critically analyse the data into themes and integrate data from various sources. For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics were used to analyse all question items used to conduct the inferential statistical analyses, and demographic data of the participants, which included students, teachers and parents. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability and validity of the internal consistency of the closed-ended scale questions in all of the questionnaire forms. The analysis results provided values of alpha more than the threshold of significance, which depicted the reliability and validity of the questionnaire tool. Correlational analysis showed a significant relationship attending NS programme and discipline level and student's commitment level to classwork and other responsibilities.

Further correlational results also found a significant relationship between the discipline level and attitude towards constructive feedback from assignments and examinations. Regression model analysis showed significant effects of attending the NS on the improvement of discipline level, attitudes towards constructive feedback in exams and assignment results and improved informed decision-making abilities which further improved the academic development of students in higher learning institutions. The results were also confirmed by the explanations gathered from the open-ended questions included in the questionnaire forms.

7.3 Highlights of the Research Findings

Academic excellence is an important aspect, and the critical variable that stakeholders in the education sector must explore to determine what makes students achieve academic excellence. However, the fundamental question that educationists must answer relates to the relevance of academic excellence for the achievement of societal goals. Academic excellence, for instance, can be a great motivator if society accords its youth the benefit of job satisfaction based on stellar results in school. The national service program in the UAE gives special consideration to excellent performing youth to defer their enrolment until they finish their academic journey. The influence of this initiative on academic performance is significant. Based on the analysis conducted on the collected, it can be seen that there is a significant connection between the national service for the youth and educational success.

The study concludes with the presumption that academic excellence determines the success levels of the students in their future life, which is a product of assumption as study results reveal that academic performance only delivers the benefits in life when combined with other infrastructural facilitation and personal qualities such as behavioural maturity. It can, therefore, be concluded that the national service must achieve equity by treating every national youth the same regardless of their academic excellence. The study results revealed that people who develop positive attitudes towards constructive feedback, increase their commitments to responsibilities and required competencies, exhibit enhanced success in life. Therefore the NS program plays a significant role in academic development and career development. Values like self-control and independent decision-making are critical for success in life.

Many colleges and universities often focus on high school grades before they allow admissions into their institutions. Grades often exhibit an individual from the aspect of academic performance only, rather than behavioural maturity, which, according to the study

results, is reinforced by national service. As a result, national service training focuses on the potential of the students, perceptions, likes and dislikes as well as their understanding of the society, to help in developing the students' self-actualisation and understanding of their strengths and talents they employ in their higher education to boost their academic performance. It can be concluded that a student who has attended the national services has developed sufficient experiential and social understanding, which effectively reinforces their GPA measures, and hence future success in their career path development.

7.4 Contribution of the Study

The study has made a significant contribution to the literature, methodology and theoretical applications regarding the significance of national service in academic performance. Majority of the previous literature has linked national services to the experiential learning skills, improvement in behaviour, attitudes, discipline and perceptions of young people about the world.

This study has reinforced the body of knowledge developed in the previous literature by trying to connect the contribution of these NS programme benefits to the academic performance of students in their higher learning institutions. Studies reviewed and used in this research adopted different methods, which include qualitative approaches such as empirical reviews, literature reviews and quantitative studies to assess the influences of national service programmes on behaviour, attitudes discipline and perceptions of young people. In this context, this research has contributed by using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the influences of the NS programme on academic performance of university students. These include thematic analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability tests of data, correlational analysis, and regression model to assess the influence of the NS programme on academic performance at the higher education level.

The systematical use of different qualitative and quantitative methods to the diagnosis and synthesis of the data strengthens the knowledge-based findings for the study topic. The theories used in this study are service-learning programmes, symbolic interactionism, transformative learning theory and social learning theories. These theories have been used in educational, physiological and psychosociological studies to understand factors affecting human behaviour, perception, attitudes and self-esteem. However, the study has used the theories to show how programmes such as the NS can influence the psychological and physical attributes of students, leading to effects on their academic performance.

7.5 Recommendations

As students move to university, they choose a career line that will influence their entire life. As revealed from the analysis of the data, behavioural maturity has a more significant influence on their decision-making processes. As shown from the analysis results, NS provides experiential skills necessary to improve behavioural maturity and decision-making process as well as confidence and self-esteem. The study recommends that students should be more informed beyond the high school grade to make the right choices of courses and career lines that will help in maintaining a high GPA throughout their stay in colleges and universities.

Thus, when a student chooses a wrong course at the university level, it is highly possible for them to end up performing poorly due to the wrong choice. In this sense, and as revealed from the study results, it is evident that national service program exposes students to a new environment and real world. Therefore, NS is a recommended program for post-high school students to help them improve their behavioural maturity and decision-making ability so that they can make informed decisions when selecting degree courses to pursue at the university levels. As a result, they will likely to have higher academic performance in terms of their average GPA in each academic year.

The results of the data analysis importantly reveal that admission into the universities and colleges must not entirely depend on the applicant's high school GPA performance. Through the national service, their excellent GPA performance is reinforced with improved behavioural maturity, experiential skills and decision-making. Thus, many universities should look for students with positive attitudes and those who have the potential of making positive decisions that will lead to a positive influence on others within and outside lecture rooms. As demonstrated in by the results of data analysis, this depends on the attitude and perceptions the students have adopted during and after high school education before joining university programs. In conclusion, the purpose of joining the national service is to help in shaping the behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of the young people. That way, they can understand the society and participate in its development, having a positive and more informed mind.

Consequently, this will improve their personal development and behavioural maturity, which, as seen from the results, are essential to their study and comprehension of both academic and real-world environment. Therefore, the NS program is recommended for post-high school people because it will make the students more informed about themselves and their future academic life, which subsequently influences their career path development. On the other hand, having a high level of discipline and commitment in the courses they choose after making an informed decision will help them maintain high academic performance.

Based on the significance of attending the NS programme after graduating from secondary school in providing soft skills, improving discipline, commitment to responsibilities, positive attitudes towards constructive feedback and ability to make informed decision-making processes, the government of UAE should think of including it into higher learning institutions. As illustrated in the study, the training programme covers courses such as adjustment of attitudes, relationships, and physical training, military training, theoretical courses related to

the socio-economic and political development of the country, specialised and applied training, reserve duties and women's programmes. These training programmes can be improved and developed into a diploma or degree programme to assist in shaping the future of the students. The experiential skills and behavioural adjustment educations play a significant role in shaping career development and opportunities for the students in different fields. Turning the programme into a diploma or degree programme will give young people the opportunity to train in different soft skills and behavioural improvement. It will be a foundational study for career development and value addition to the subsequent degree programmes in the higher learning institutions.

For the young people of UAE to benefit fully from the NS service, the government should introduce the skills taught in the programme in secondary schools. The introduction of the soft skills and behavioural improvement skills at the secondary school level will prepare the students for their career path before they come of age. Introducing aspects of the national values in relation to socio-cultural and religious components will influence the perception of students about the world and this will guide their interest and career path. Soft skills at the school level expose the students on real-world challenges and how to solve them using these skills at a young age. The establishment of the National Service has several potential benefits to the nation regarding early preparation and development of the future human capital. Therefore, more research is still needed to explore the benefits and potential challenges of the National Service to the country and young people.

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[services/social-affairs/preserving-the-emirati-national-identity/initiatives-to-preserve-the-national-identity-of-the-uae/the-uae-national-service-law](https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/social-affairs/preserving-the-emirati-national-identity/initiatives-to-preserve-the-national-identity-of-the-uae/the-uae-national-service-law)

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APPENDICES

Appendix I – Students Consent Form and Questionnaire form

IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF EMIRATI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Dear Respondent,

This is a request to you to participate in a research study entitled “**Impact of National Service on Academic Performance of Emirati University Students**”. The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of the national service introduced by the UAE government on the academic performance of university students. The study targets university students in their first year aged from 19 years and above, teachers and parents. You will not be penalised if you refuse to participate or decide to withdraw from the study after you have agreed to participate. Your participation will involve answering questions that will take a maximum of 15 minutes only. A questionnaire will be used to collect information from you as the respondent. The information you provide will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified as the person from whom the information was obtained. Your participation will help the researcher to get the necessary information to achieve the study objective, which is to determine the influence of national service (NS) on the academic performance of university students. The information you provide will also help the researcher to make recommendations that can improve the government policy on the National Service program among university student. Should you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, please contact Dr Abdulai Abukari on +9714 279 1469 or abduhai.abukari@buid.ac.ae.

QUESTIONNAIRE FORM FOR STUDENTS

RESEARCH TOPIC:

IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE (NS) ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SECTION 1: PRECAUTION STATEMENT

1. The respondent should be a male Emirati university student in his first year of study
2. The information given will be treated with confidentiality.
3. Tick the appropriate responses in the spaces.
4. Do not give your name.
5. The questionnaire is meant for academic purposes only.
6. Please be as honest as possible.

SECTION 2: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age of respondent.

- 1) 19 – 21 years
- 2) 22 – 24 years
- 3) 25 – 27 years
- 4) 28 – 30 years
- 5) Over 30 years

2. What is your occupation?

- 1) Full-time employment
- 2) Part-time employment
- 3) Self-employment
- 4) Full-time student
- 5) Other occupational arrangement (specify)

SECTION 3: NS PROGRAMME STATUS:

(The following questions have been included to know if you attended the National Program before joining university/college and the influence of NS on your behavioural maturity)

3. Which NS programme did you attend? (Tick the appropriate box)

- ☐ 9-Month NS programme
- ☐ Current 12-Month NS Programme

4. To what extent do you believe being an NS alumni improved your reasoning capacity compared to your previous capabilities immediately after graduating from secondary school? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Less improvement in my reasoning capacity
- ☐ Slightly less improvement in my reasoning capacity
- ☐ Equal improvement in my reasoning capacity
- ☐ Slightly more improvement in my reasoning capacity
- ☐ More improvement my reasoning capacity

SECTION 4: IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS

5. How has your self-understanding improved after National service? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Little improvement
- ☐ Moderate improvement
- ☐ Substantial improvement
- ☐ Major improvement

6. How has your understanding of the national values improved after National service? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Little improvement
- ☐ Moderate improvement
- ☐ Substantial improvement
- ☐ Major improvement

7. What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after National service? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Little improvement
- ☐ Moderate improvement
- ☐ Substantial improvement
- ☐ Major improvement

8. What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?

- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Little improvement
- ☐ Moderate improvement
- ☐ Substantial improvement
- ☐ Major improvement

9. In your own words, describe in the following box using three sentences your view about the importance of NS in shaping your college and university academic performance.

10. Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution. (*Tick the appropriate box based on your score*):

- ☐ Very low
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ High
- ☐ Very high

SECTION 5: IMPACT ON ATTITUDE

11. What is your level of self-confidence in the course you are taking at your college or higher education institution?

- ☐ No self-confidence
- ☐ Low self-confidence
- ☐ Moderate self-confidence
- ☐ High self-confidence
- ☐ Extremely high self-confidence

12. What is the level of satisfaction with the teaching methods for your classes?

- ☐ Highly dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Highly satisfied

13. What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?

- ☐ Highly dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Highly satisfied

14. What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?

- ☐ Highly dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Highly satisfied

15. How well do you balance your academic work with extra-curricular activities? (*Tick the appropriate box based on your score*):

- ☐ Not good
- ☐ Slightly good
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Very good

SECTION 6: IMPACT OF NS ON STUDENT'S DECISION MAKING

16. What was the basis of your choice of course?

- ☐ Based on the complexity of the course
- ☐ Based on popularity
- ☐ Based on my skills and abilities
- ☐ Based on parents' advice
- ☐ Other reasons (specify) ...

17. What is your level of satisfaction with the course you are undertaking at the college or higher education institution?

- 1) Highly dissatisfied
- 2) Dissatisfied
- 3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4) Satisfied
- 5) Highly satisfied

18. Rate your overall academic performance in college/university

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 0-20 percent<input type="checkbox"/> 21-40 percent<input type="checkbox"/> 41-60 percent<input type="checkbox"/> 61-80 percent<input type="checkbox"/> 81-100 percent |
|--|

Appendix II – Parents’ Consent Form and Questionnaire form

**IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
EMIRATI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

Dear Respondent,

This is a request to you to participate in a research study entitled “**Impact of National Service on Academic Performance of Emirati University Students**”. The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of the national service introduced by the UAE government on the academic performance of university students. The study targets university students in their first year aged from 19 years and above, teachers and parents. You will not in any way, be disadvantaged if you refuse to participate. Your participation will involve answering questions that will take a maximum of 15 minutes only. A questionnaire will be used to collect information from you as the respondent. The information you provide will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified as the person from whom the information was obtained. Your participation will help the researcher to get the necessary information to achieve the study objective, which is to determine the influence of national service (NS) on the academic performance of university students. The information you provide will also help the researcher to make recommendations that can improve the government policy on the National Service program among university student. Should you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, please contact Dr Abdulai Abukari on +9714 279 1469 or abduhai.abukari@buid.ac.ae

QUESTIONNAIRE FORM FOR PARENTS

RESEARCH TOPIC:

IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE (NS) ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SECTION 1: PRECAUTION STATEMENT

1. The respondent should be a parent of a male student in his first year of study at Emirati university.
2. The institution chosen for the study is High Colleges of Technology (HCT) University
3. The information given will be treated confidentially.
4. Tick the appropriate responses in the spaces.
5. Do not give your name.
6. The questionnaire is meant for academic purposes only.
7. Please be as honest as possible.

SECTION 2: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age of respondent (*Tick the appropriate box*)

- ☐ Below 35 years
- ☐ 35 – 44 years
- ☐ 45 – 54 years
- ☐ 55 – 64 years
- ☐ 65 and above years

2. What occupation? (*Tick the appropriate box*)

- ☐ Full-time employment
- ☐ Part-time-employment
- ☐ Self-employment
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unable to work

3. What is the highest educational qualification? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Primary Level
- ☐ Secondary Level
- ☐ Diploma Level
- ☐ Degree Level
- ☐ Post-Graduate Level

SECTION 3: UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONAL SERVICE:

4. Are you aware of or familiar with the NS (National Service)? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Which NS programme duration are you aware of?

1. 9-Month NS programme
2. Current 12-Month NS Programme
3. Both
4. None
5. Other (Specify)

Proceed to the next question only if your answer to question 5 above is 1), 2) or 3), otherwise hand in your questionnaire form.

6. To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumnus improved reasoning capacity of your son? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Less improvement in his reasoning capacity
- ☐ Slightly less improvement in his reasoning capacity
- ☐ Equal improvement in reasoning capacity
- ☐ Slightly more improvement in his reasoning capacity
- ☐ More improvement in his reasoning capacity

SECTION 4: IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL AND LEARNING SKILLS ON DISCIPLINARY LEVEL IN UNIVERSITIES

7. How do you compare the discipline level of your son before and after being an NS alumnus? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Less disciplined
- ☐ Slightly less disciplined
- ☐ Equally disciplined
- ☐ Slightly more disciplined
- ☐ More disciplined

8. How committed is your son to his studies? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ No commitment
- ☐ Little commitment
- ☐ Moderate commitment
- ☐ High level of commitment
- ☐ Very high level of commitment

9. Rate the change in overall discipline level of your son after NS programme *(Tick the appropriate box based on your score):*

- ☐ Very low change
- ☐ Low change
- ☐ Moderate change
- ☐ High change
- ☐ Very high change

SECTION 5: IMPACT OF NS PROGRAMME ON STUDENT'S ATTITUDES

10. What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ No confidence
- ☐ Low confidence
- ☐ Moderate confidence
- ☐ High confidence
- ☐ Very high confidence

11. How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Highly dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly dissatisfied

- ☐ Slightly satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Strongly satisfied

12. What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations? *(Tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ Highly dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Highly satisfied

13. Rate overall confidence level of NS students programme he takes at a college or higher education institution. *(Tick the appropriate box based on your score):*

- ☐ Very low confidence level
- ☐ Low confidence level
- ☐ Moderate confidence level
- ☐ High confidence level
- ☐ Very high confidence level

Appendix III: Teachers'/Lecturers Consent Form and Questionnaire Form

**IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
EMIRATI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

Dear Respondent,

This is a request to you to participate in a research study entitled “**Impact of National Service on Academic Performance of Emirati University Students**”. The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of the national service introduced by the UAE government on the academic performance of university students. The study targets university students in their first year aged from 19 years and above, teachers and parents. You will not be penalised if you refuse to participate or decide to withdraw from the study after you have agreed to participate. Your participation will involve answering questions that will take a maximum of 15 minutes only. A questionnaire will be used to collect information from you as the respondent. The information you provide will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified as the person from whom the information was obtained. Your participation will help the researcher to get the necessary information to achieve the study objective, which is to determine the influence of national service (NS) on the academic performance of university students. The information you provide will also help the researcher to make recommendations that can improve the government policy on the National Service program among university student. Should you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, please contact Dr Abdulai Abukari on +9714 279 1469 or abdualai.abukari@buid.ac.ae.

QUESTIONNAIRE FORM FOR TEACHERS

RESEARCH TOPIC:

IMPACT OF NATIONAL SERVICE (NS) ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE UAE

SECTION 1: PRECAUTION STATEMENT

1. The respondent should be teachers of Emirati university students in their first year of study
2. The information given will be treated confidentially.
3. Tick the appropriate responses in the spaces.
4. Do not give your name.
5. The questionnaire is meant for academic purposes only.
6. Please be as honest as possible.

SECTION 2: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age of respondent.

- ☐ Below 35 years
- ☐ 35 – 44 years
- ☐ 45 – 54 years
- ☐ 55 – 64 years
- ☐ 65 and above years

SECTION 3: UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONAL SERVICE:

2. What is your understanding of the meaning NS (National Service)? Explain in 2 to 3 sentences.

3. Which NS programme duration are you aware of?

- ☐ 9-Month NS programme
- ☐ Current 12-Month NS Programme
- ☐ Both
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Proceed to the next question only if your answer to question 3 above is the first, second or third choice, otherwise, hand in your questionnaire form.

4. To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumni improved reasoning capacity level compared to capabilities of your students who did not undergo NS program?

- ☐ Less improvement in their reasoning capacity
- ☐ Slightly less improvement in their reasoning capacity
- ☐ Equal improvement in their reasoning capacity
- ☐ Slightly more improvement in their reasoning capacity
- ☐ More improvement in their reasoning capacity

SECTION 4: IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL AND LEARNING SKILLS ON

DISCIPLINARY LEVEL IN UNIVERSITIES

5. How do you compare the discipline of NS alumni students to non-NS alumni students?

- ☐ Less disciplined
- ☐ Slightly less disciplined
- ☐ Same disciplined
- ☐ Slightly more Disciplined
- ☐ More disciplined

6. What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?

- ☐ Below 40 percent
- ☐ 40 – 55 percent
- ☐ 56 – 70 percent
- ☐ 71 – 85 percent
- ☐ Above 85 percent

7. What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among non-NS students?

- ☐ Below 40 percent
- ☐ 40 – 55 percent
- ☐ 56 – 70 percent
- ☐ 71 – 85 percent
- ☐ Above 85 percent

8. In your own words, describe in the following box using three sentences your view about the importance of NS in shaping the academic performance of your students.

9. Rate the overall discipline level of your NS students during their first-year college or higher education institution. (*Tick the appropriate box based on your score*):

- ☐ Very low discipline level
- ☐ Low discipline level
- ☐ Moderate discipline level
- ☐ High discipline level
- ☐ Very high discipline level

SECTION 5: IMPACT OF NS PROGRAMME ON STUDENT'S ATTITUDES

10. What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?

- ☐ No impact
- ☐ Low impact
- ☐ Moderate impact
- ☐ High impact
- ☐ Very high impact

11. How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?

- ☐ Highly dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Highly satisfied

12. In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?

- ☐ Less dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly less dissatisfied
- ☐ Equally satisfied
- ☐ Slightly more Satisfied
- ☐ More satisfied

13. Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college or higher education institution. (*Tick the appropriate box based on your score*):

- ☐ Very low confidence
- ☐ Low confidence
- ☐ Moderate confidence
- ☐ High confidence

Appendix IV: Descriptive Statistics for Item Questions for Students, Parents and Teachers

Descriptive Statistics for Student's Data					
<i>Question Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
How has your self-understanding improved after National service?	1843	1	4	2.88	.492
How has your understanding of the national values improved after National service?	1843	1	5	3.92	.464
What is the level of improvement in your real-world skills after National service?	1843	1	5	3.99	.345
What is the level of improvement in your responsibility to your duties?	1843	1	5	3.94	.438
Rate your overall discipline level during your stay in the college or higher education institution	1843	1	5	3.98	.392
What is your level of self-confidence in the course you are taking at your college or higher education institution?	1843	1	5	3.94	.445
What is the level of satisfaction with the teaching methods for your classes?	1843	1	5	3.99	.367
What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your assignments?	1843	1	5	3.97	.397
What is your level of satisfaction with the results of your examinations?	1843	1	5	3.99	.343
How well do you balance your academic work with extra-curricular activities?	1843	1	5	3.95	.423
What was the basis of your choice of course?	1843	1	5	4.00	.359
What is your level of satisfaction with the course you are undertaking at the college or higher education institution?	1843	1	5	3.99	.341
Rate your overall academic performance in collage/university	1843	1	5	3.92	.522
Valid N (listwise)	1843				

Descriptive Statistics for Parents					
<i>Item Questions</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Which NS programme duration are you aware of?	106	1	3	2.75	.614
To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumnus improved reasoning capacity of your son?	106	3	5	4.63	.574

How do you compare the discipline level of your son before and after being an NS alumnus?	106	2	5	3.67	.581
How committed is your son to his studies?	106	2	5	3.71	.690
Rate the change in overall discipline level of your son after the NS programme	106	2	5	3.70	.664
What is the impact of NS on the level of confidence of your son in the degree programme he takes at a college or higher education institution?	106	2	5	4.55	.706
How does your NS alumnus son rate his satisfaction to teaching methods for classes he takes at college or higher education institution?	106	1	5	3.58	.645
What is the level of satisfaction of your NS alumnus son with the results of their assignments/examinations?	106	2	5	3.70	.664
Rate overall confidence level of NS students on the programme he takes at a college or higher education institution.	106	2	5	3.71	.690
Valid N (listwise)	106				

Descriptive Statistics for Teachers					
Item Questions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
To what extent do you believe that being an NS alumni improved reasoning capacity level compared to capabilities of your students who did not undergo NS program?	106	1	5	3.74	.919
How do you compare the discipline level of NS Alumni to non-NS alumni students?	106	1	4	2.90	.515
What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among NS students?	106	1	5	3.82	.629
What is the rate (%) of lecture attendance among non-NS students?	106	1	4	2.30	.664
Rate the overall discipline level of your NS students during their first year in college or higher education institution	106	2	5	3.90	.515
What is the impact of NS on the level of self-confidence of your students?	106	1	5	3.84	.635
How satisfied do you think the NS alumni students are with the teaching methods for your classes they take?	106	2	5	3.90	.515
In comparison to non-NS students, what is the level of satisfaction of NS alumni students with the results they get from assignments/examinations you give them?	106	1	5	3.87	.677

Rate overall confidence level of NS students in your lecture methods and mode of assessment at the college or higher education institution.	106	1	5	3.86	.682
NS Status	106	1	2	1.50	.502
Rate (%) of lecture attendance	106	1	5	3.15	.993
Valid N (listwise)	106				