Multi ethnicity residents perception towards a country – evidences from United Arab Emirates

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Abstract: The study focused on identifying and testing the variables that impact residents' perception towards a country i.e., UAE. The study was conducted among the residents who belong to multi-ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia including UAE nationals about the selected variables that influence their perception about UAE as a place of destination at present, and becoming a place of excellence in 2030. Two hundred thirteen respondents from different ethnic groups were interviewed and the results revealed: 1) entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, medical tourism, etc. elicit a positive perception among residents about present status of UAE; 2) entertainment, tourism, safety and security, investment, business, event management, etc. elicit a positive perception among residents about UAE becoming a place of excellence in the year 2030. The implications of the results were discussed.

Keywords: residents; perception; multi ethnic groups; emerging economies; construct analysis modelling.

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1 Introduction

It was imperative to understand how residents play a vital role in contributing to the development of a country and their views were very vital to be considered for governing authorities to work on several civic and social aspects. Moreover, such views would definitely provide a cue to governing authorities to position a country among incumbent residents those who choose to migrate and contribute to multi-facet development of the country. Several studies were attempted towards unearthing residents' perception primarily towards tourism development and sustainability (Fiallo and Jacobson, 1995; Teye et al., 2002; Kim and Petrick, 2005; Zhou and Ap, 2009; Almeida-Garcia et al., 2016). With reference to understanding the research works done pertinent to the area of the study i.e., UAE, it was found that several studies were conducted towards residents' perceptions (Hammad et al., 2017; Zaiden and Kovacs, 2017) towards tourists and tourism growth aspects in different cities of UAE. Ramsey et al. (2016) conducted a study in Canada about the role of small cities in developing the region in the case of Brandon from Manitoba state. The study explored the perceptions of citizens towards pace and direction of change related to Brandon and the implications were documented. Extensive research of literature to identifying the residents' perceptions towards a country with reference to different variables influence residents to choose to visit, settle and live in a country revealed that no direct research or study has been conducted towards the area of the study. Therefore, the researchers intended to embark on a comprehensive study to identify the variables that influence residents' perceptions (including citizens and expatriates) towards a country i.e., UAE. The researchers intended to study the residents' perception towards present and future (year 2030) status of UAE considering its strategic plan for the year 2030. Therefore, the researchers intended to identify the residents' perception towards UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030 on the selected variables. Considering the area of study i.e., UAE which houses residents from different corners of the world, it was imperative to understand and include the perceptions of residents who belong to different ethnic groups. An extensive literature review was done to identify the variables impact residents' perceptions towards a country and revealed that no such variables had been used in earlier studies. Therefore, the researchers conducted a focus group study among the selected audience i.e., students

from multi ethnic groups (only indicative) to identify such variables such as entertainment, investment, tourism, shopping, work, business, comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, gourmet destination, safety and security, medical tourism, manufacturing hub, event management, etc. The selected variables would be used to test the impact of the same over residents' perception towards the present status of UAE and its future status i.e., UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030 in line with its strategic plan. The outcomes of the intended study would vastly benefit the policy makers of UAE to understand the perceptions of residents who belong to multi ethnic groups towards UAE. Such outcomes would help the policy makers to maintain and upgrade the variables found to have a high impact and develop the variables found to have a low impact. The outcomes would also enable the policy makers to understand the variables that influence ethnic oriented perceptions towards UAE and develop effective policies and strategies accordingly. Thus, the researchers used the focus group interview method to identify and select the variables used in this study. Therefore, using such variables, a comprehensive research objective and hypotheses had been developed as follows.

2   Literature review

Pouya and Turer Baskaya (2018) investigated the role and impact of residents' perception towards urban development citing the case of Beykoz riverine development in Istanbul. The study discussed several aspects such as restorative activities of riverine landscape i.e., enhancement, changing of course of river, and other aspects. Billingham and Kimelberg (2018) investigated the controlling for where within their regions respondents live, they are more likely to label their communities 'urban' if they perceive local schools to be low in quality and their neighbourhoods to be unsafe. Notably, these effects are not consistent across racial and ethnic groups. Blouin (2018) examined about several extracurricular factors outside of the workplace contribute to resident learning and identity development, including interpersonal relations, which have positive and negative impacts. The most often noted negative impact of interpersonal relations outside of work between residents and faculty related to perceived lapses in teaching skills. Schaefer and Mazerolle (2018) investigated and identified the results that indicate that lived experiences with prior victimisation and interactions with the police, greater frequencies of neighbouring behaviours but lower levels of collective efficacy, socioeconomic disadvantage, and ethnic homogeneity are all associated with a greater likelihood of reporting serious local crime problems. Bronkov et al. (2019) discussed the impact of local tourism over residents' perception through analyzing the tourism development of two national parks in Serbia. The survey had been conducted among the residents stay near two national parks in order to find the impact of tourism over local community. The results revealed the residents shown positive perception towards tourists visiting the national parks. The study also revealed certain aspects such as poor impact on tourism over local community with reference to knowledge and personal involvement, education and employment found to have strong influence over resident perception, etc. Wei and Suosheng (2019) conducted a comparative study on residents' place-based perceptions

(China v/s USA) towards the impact of tourism and support towards tourism. The study also examined the existence of cultural difference and found the existence of cultural difference in terms of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Distinctiveness was only found to be exist in China and continuity not found in both th culture. Tichaawa and Moyo (2019) examined the urban resident's perceptions towards tourism development in Bulawayo region, Zimbabwe. The study revealed that gender, education, length of stay and income acted as predictors to the attitude of residents' towards tourism development. However, the study also revealed that residents acted strongly towards environmental aspects affected by tourism rather economic and socio-cultural aspects. Majid et al. (2019) conducted a study in Lahore, Pakistan with regard to find the attachment and perception towards sense of belongingness with proposed mediating effect of involvement of residents in World Heritage Sites (WHS) programs. The study revealed

there is no significant effect of perception on involvement and sense of belongingness towards WHS programs. The study also revealed the people and place attachment found to have a significant relationship of involvement of residents in WHS programs and sense of belongingness. The aforesaid literature review has provided a much needed direction to the researcher to set the theme of the study on residents' perception. However, no pertinent reviews have focused on measuring the residents' perception towards a country's development and a place of excellence. Thus, the researchers used the focus group interview method to identify and select the variables used in this study. Therefore, using such variables, a comprehensive research objective and hypotheses had been developed as follows.

3 Objectives and hypotheses

3.1 Impact of selected variables on residents' present perception towards a country i.e., UAE

Several studies have been conducted to identify the existing perception of residents towards several aspects such as, tourism development (Fiallo and Jacobson, 1995; Teye et al., 2002; Kim and Petrick, 2005; Zhou and Ap, 2009; Almeida-Garcia et al., 2016; Hammad et al., 2017; Zaiden and Kovacs, 2017; Bronkov et al., 2019; Wei and Suosheng, 2019; Tichaawa and Moyo, 2019), changing a course of riverine (Pouya and Turer Baskaya, 2018), urban projects (Ramsey et al., 2016; Billingham and Kimelberg, 2018), developing a historical city (Majid et al., 2019). The aforesaid studies have provided a direction to the researchers to set pertinent hypotheses which have been developed a focus group study to identify the pertinent variables used to measure the present perception of residents' towards a country i.e., UAE.

H1 There is a positive impact of selective variables (entertainment, investment, tourism, shopping, work, business, comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, large manufacturing plants, gourmet destination, safety and security, and medical tourism, regional and global events) on residents' perception towards a country.

3.2   *Impact of selected variables on future perception (year 2030) of residents towards a country i.e., UAE*

Few studies attempted to identify the future perception of residents towards certain aspects such as outcomes of tourism projects (Hammad et al., 2017; Zaiden and Kovacs, 2017; Tichaawa and Moyo, 2019), future course of changing riverine and future impact (Pouya and Turer Baskaya, 2018), developing a historical city and future impact of developing tourism (Majid et al., 2019), etc. However, no studies predicted the perception of residents towards a country in a particular year. Therefore, the researchers need to develop set variables to develop pertinent hypotheses to measure the residents' perception towards a country i.e., UAE in a future date i.e., 2030.

H2   There is a positive perception of residents towards becoming a place of excellence based on the selected variables (entertainment, investment, tourism, shopping, work, business, comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, large manufacturing plants, gourmet destination, safety and security, and medical tourism, regional and global events) in the year 2030.

4   Conceptual motivation of the study

Figure 1 describes the formulation of the research model or conceptual motivation proposed to be identified through the problem defined for the study.

Figure 1   Conceptual motivation of the proposed model
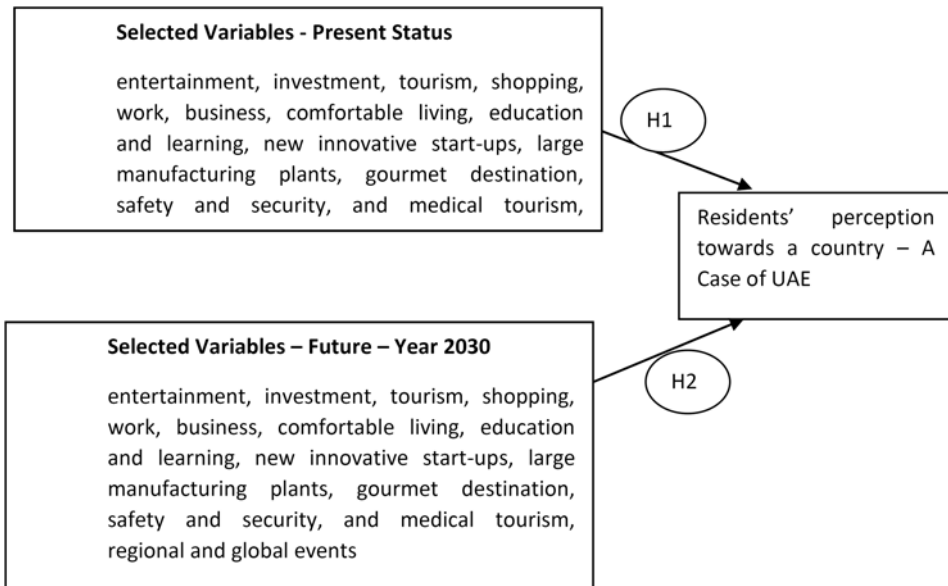
The conceptual model had been proposed to identify the impact of the selected variables over residents' perceptions towards a country, with specific reference to UAE. The researchers identified the variables through focus group interview conducted over set of

residents representing different ethnic groups such as Middle East, South Asian, African, etc. The variables focused on different facets such as work, business, investment, safety aspects, entertainment, tourism, shopping, commencing new businesses, installing manufacturing plants, education and learning, comfortable living, health facilities, conducting regional/global events, etc. impacting residents' perception towards a country in which they live. 90% of the residents of UAE are expatriates from different corners of the world. The pertinent variables have been found and intended to test the same to measure the perceptions of residents' (present and future) towards a country i.e., UAE. Thus, Figure 1 consists of such variables leading to measure the residents' present and future perception towards United Arab Emirates (UAE). Such an environment requires the contribution of residents to the growth and development of a country, including nationals. Therefore, UAE qualifies to be considered under this aspect to embark on such a research to identify the variables impact perceptions of residents including UAE nationals about the present status and future perception of residents about UAE as a place of excellence on different aspects in the year 2030. Therefore, the researchers defined the variables/constructs based on the different aspects representing work, businesses, safety aspects, investment, entertainment, tourism, shopping, commencing new businesses, installing manufacturing plants, education and learning, comfortable living, health facilities, conducting regional/global events, etc. The novelty of the study was to identify the perceptions of residents representing different ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, including UAE nationals towards the above aspects at present, and future perceptions about UAE as a place of excellence on the above aspects in the year 2030. A detailed explanation of the construct development is given below (Tables 1 and 2).

4.1   Operationalisation of constructs

The study intends to identify the impact of selected variables over residents' perceptions towards a country, specific reference to UAE. The selected variables represented the different aspects representing work, businesses, shopping safety aspects, investment, entertainment, tourism, commencing new businesses, installing manufacturing plants, education and learning, comfortable living, health facilities, conducting regional/global events, etc. The validity of the construct i.e., residents' perceptions towards a country had been tested through a set of statements completed by the respondents. The selected variables had been tested to identify the impact of the same on the chosen construct (residents' perception towards a country).

4.2   Construct development

The researchers framed major constructs designed through the outcomes of focus group interviews in order to test the impact of the same over residents' perceptions towards a country (present and in the year 2030). The Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis had been done to

validate the selected constructs (Sakkthivel, 2014). Table 1 denoted the variables used for the development of constructs and reliability analysis on the variables selected for the study.

5   Methodology

The study used the descriptive research design and intended to find the impact of selected variables over residents' perception (present and future – year 2030) towards a country with specific reference to the UAE. The study was conducted among residents (*legal residents of UAE who obtained Emirates ID*) representing different ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia and including UAE nationals. The study was conducted among the respondents who represent different demographic profiles such as gender, age, marital status, literacy, occupation, employment status, income, ethnic groups, nationality and place of living (*different emirates)*. The respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study, and asked to participate in the interview. The trained investigators were used to personally interview the selected respondents and obtained the required information.

The focus group interview method (consists of respondents from different ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia and UAE nationals) had been used to identify and select the pertinent variables used for the study. The variables were selected based on the most number of occurrences during the discussion among the selected focus group. The variables found to focus on different facets of a country such as work, business, investment, manufacturing hub, innovative startups, entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, settlement and comfortable living, medical tourism, event management, etc. The study used the following variables as independent variables such as work, business, investment, manufacturing hub, innovative startups, entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, settlement and comfortable living, medical tourism, event management, etc. The study intended to measure the impact of the aforesaid independent variables over residents' present and future perception towards a country i.e., UAE (dependent variable). The stratified random sampling technique had been used to collect primary data from the target respondents based on the ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia and UAE nationals. The primary data had been collected from 226 respondents and finally 213 (N = 213) respondents had been selected for the final data analysis and the rest of the responses were left out due to the inadequacy of the data. The sample size was adequate to conduct the requisite analyses determined for the study and arrived at the desirable outcomes. A structured questionnaire had been used to collect the response from the target respondents. The questionnaire consisted of the 28 statements related to the constructs (present and future perception) selected for the study. The statements focused on the selected variables such as entertainment, investment, tourism, shopping, work, business, settlement and comfortable living, higher education and learning, new innovative startups, manufacturing hub, gourmet destination, safety and security, medical tourism, event management with reference to finding the impact of the same over residents' perception (present and future – year 2030) towards a country with specific to UAE.

A 7 point Likert scale (completely agree…completely disagree) had been constructed in order to identify the impact of the selected variables on residents' perception (present and future – year 2030) towards a country with reference to UAE. The set of statements primarily developed to identify the residents' perception towards UAE achieving a place of excellence in the year 2030 on different aspects. The variables had been developed as hypotheses H1 and H2 in order to validate the same through the statistical tools used for

the study. The collection tool had been constructed in English considering the target respondents represent different ethnic groups found to possess adequate knowledge and understanding in the English language. One sample T-test and construct analysis modelling had been used to test the impact of selected variables over residents' perception (present and future) towards a country with specific reference to the UAE (Sakkthivel and Rajev, 2012; Manickam and Sriram, 2013; Sakkthivel, 2014). The model was also used to check the consistency and model fit of the constructs selected. Construct analysis Modelling (Manickam and Sriram, 2013) had been used to identify the high and low impact variables that influence resident perception (present and future) towards a country – UAE. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis had been conducted to test the validity of attitude scale secured 0.930 which proved very high reliability.

Table 1 Description of reliability statistics (Cronbach's alpha) of the constructs selected for the study

Selected variables – present perception VS1 (14)	Selected variables – future perception VS2 (14)
Entertainment, investment, tourism, shopping, work, business, settlement and comfortable living, higher education and learning, new innovative startups, manufacturing hub, gourmet destination, safety and security, medical tourism, event management	Entertainment, investment, tourism, shopping, work, business, settlement and comfortable living, higher education and learning, new innovative startups, manufacturing hub, gourmet destination, safety and security, medical tourism, event management
0.924	0.829

Notes: VS = variable segment.
        Figures in parentheses indicate the number of variables.

Table 1 denoted the reliability statistics (Cronbach's) of the constructs selected for the study. The results clearly indicated the conformity of the variables selected for the study.

Table 2 Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic variables	Profile
Gender	Male: 61%; Female: 39%
Age	Below 20 : 28 %; 21–30 : 45%; 31–40: 17%; 41–50: 8%; above 50: 2%
Marital status	Married: 37%; single: 63%
Employment status	Employed:52%; unemployed: 48%
Occupation	Student: 46%; govt: 14%; private: 22%; business: 12%; homemaker: 6%
Monthly income (AED or equivalent)	>20,000: 65%, 20,001–30,000: 21%; 30,001–40,000: 8%; < 40,001: 6%
Education	Secondary: 9%; diploma: 18%; bachelor:50%; masters: 20%; PhD: 3%
Ethnic group	Americas: 8%; Europe: 7%; Africa: 27%; Middle East: 11% ;South Asia:30; UAE; 17%
Place of residence	Abu Dhabi:3%; Dubai:23%; Sharjah:58%; Ras Al Kaima: 1%; Ajman: 12%; others: 3%

6   Analysis and discussions

6.1   *Identify the variables impact residents' perceptions towards a country – present status (testing of hypothesis – H1)*

One sample T-Test (2-tailed, 99% confidence interval at 212df) had been conducted to identify how the variables influence the perception of residents' about the present status of UAE. It is identified that all the selected variables were found to have a positive impact over residents' perception about the present status of country i.e., UAE (entertainment t = 18.675, p < 0.01; investment t = 17.539, p < 0.01; tourism t = 22.035, p < 0.01; shopping t = 23.002, p < 0.01; work t = 13.326, p < 0.01; business t = 18.060, p < 0.01; settlement and comfortable living t = 16.761, p < 0.01; education and learning t = 15.717, p < 0.01; new innovative start-ups t = 17.681, p < 0.01; manufacturing hub t = 12.147, p < 0.01; gourmet destination t = 17.468, P < 0.01; safety and security t = 23.090, p < 0.01; medical tourism t = 18.73, p < 0.01; event management t = 19.410, p < 0.01). It is evident from the outcomes that the hypothesis H1 was found to be positive and the selected variables found to have positively impact residents' perception about the present status of UAE.

6.2   *Identify the variables that impact residents' perceptions towards a country – future (year 2030) (testing of hypothesis – H2)*

One sample T-Test (2-tailed, 99% confidence interval at 212df) had been conducted to find the variables that impact the perception of residents about the future (year 2030) of a country i.e., UAE. It is specific to identify residents' perception towards UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence of the selected variables in the future i.e., year 2030. The results revealed that all the selected variables were found to have a positive influence over residents' perception about the future status (year 2030) of a country i.e., UAE. The outcomes portrayed the residents' perception about UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030 (entertainment t = 22.028, p < 0.01; investment t = 24.059, p < 0.01; tourism t = 29.261, p < 0.01; shopping t = 25.850, p < 0.01; work t = 19.067, p < 0.01; business t = 6.369, p < 0.01; settlement and comfortable living t = 18.800, p < 0.01; education and learning t = 16.729, p < 0.01; new innovative start-ups t = 18.933, p < 0.01; manufacturing hub t = 18.037, p < 0.01; gourmet destination t = 19.918, P < 0.01; safety and security t = 26.725, p < 0.01; medical tourism t = 21.182, p < 0.01; event management t = 23.494, p < 0.01). It is evident from the results that the hypothesis H2 was found to be positive and the selected variables were found to have positively impacted residents' perception about the future status (year 2030) of UAE.

Hence, it is imperative to understand that the selected variables were found to positively influence residents' perception towards present and future status (year 2030) of UAE. Therefore, the hypotheses set for the study H1 and H2 were found to have been proved.

6.3 Construct analysis modelling to identify the high and low impact variables – residents' perception towards present status of a country i.e., UAE

$$\mathbf{f(PSi)} = \left[\sum Cj/Cn \right] \left[\sum_{i=1}^{n} Si/n \right]$$

f(PSi)   residents' perception towards present status of a country i.e., UAE.

Si   agreement level score of the respondents towards the present status of country i.e., UAE

Cj   sum of constructs score

Cn   no. of constructs taken.

The above modelling produced the following results of the variables have high to low perception of residents towards present status of country i.e., UAE (high to low value). 'i' denotes the agreement level score, 'j' denotes the sum of constructs/variables score, and 'n' denotes the number of respondents and number of constructs taken for the study and analysis. The construct analysis has been developed to identify the influence of the selected constructs/variables on the respondents. The variables asked through questions summed up and divided by number of respondents responded to such questions which revealed a mean value for each variable. Those scores arrived from the variables in terms of mean values would be interpreted according the highest to the lowest value. The values would be provided ranks as 1, 2, 3, …, n. The highest score denotes the highest impact variables over residents' perception towards a country's present status i.e., UAE and so on. The sum of the mean values of the selected variables has been divided by the no. of variables selected for the study, and the mean value arrived will be considered midpoint. The mean value of the variables above the midpoint (5.62) will be considered high impact variables and vice versa.

The above modelling revealed that tourism secured (6.0) 1st rank, shopping secured (5.97) 2nd rank, safety and security (5.95) – 3rd rank, event management (5.78) – 4th rank, entertainment (5.74) – 5th rank, medical tourism (5.67) – 6th rank, investment (5.59) – 7th rank, business (5.56) -8th rank, settlement and comfortable living (5.55) – 9th rank, new innovative start-ups (5.54) – 10th rank, gourmet destination (5.53) – 11th rank, education and learning (5.45) – 12th rank, work (5.27) – 13th rank, and manufacturing hub (5.13) secured the last position i.e., 14th rank. It is evident that tourism, shopping, and safety and security aspects were found to have a better impact over residents' perception towards UAE present status. Further analysis done to find the high and low impact variables influencing residents' perception towards UAE's present status, it is found that entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, medical tourism, etc. elicit high perception among the residents' towards UAE's present status, whereas, investment, work, business, settlement and comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, manufacturing hub, gourmet

destination, etc. elicit a low perception among residents' towards UAE's present status (Figure 2). Hence, it is inferred that the respondents have high perception towards entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, medical tourism, etc. with regard to UAE's present status. Thus, the aforesaid outcomes effectively portray residents' perception towards present status of UAE.

Figure 2   Modelling of high to low impact variables over residents' perception towards present status of country i.e., UAE
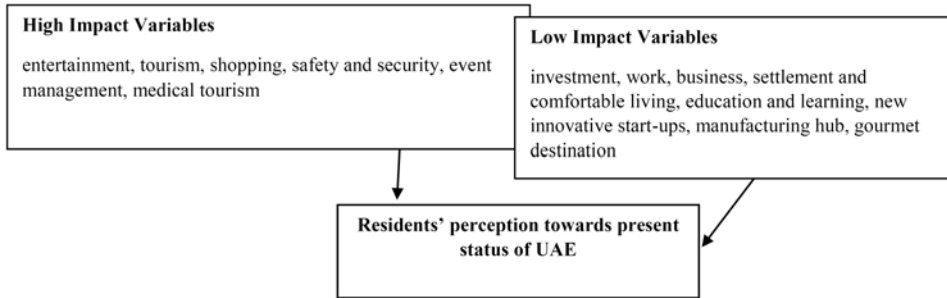
6.4 Construct analysis modelling to identify the high and low impact variables – residents' perception towards future (year 2030) status of a country i.e., UAE

$$\mathbf{f(FSi)} = \left[\sum Cj/Cn \right] \left[\sum_{i=1}^{n} Si/n \right]$$

f(FSi)   residents' perception towards future (year 2030) status of a country i.e., UAE

Si   agreement level score of the respondents towards the future status of country i.e., UAE

Cj   sum of constructs score

Cn   no. of constructs taken.

The construct analysis modelling revealed the residents' perception towards UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030 with reference to the selected variables. The mid-point (5.85) had been identified to find the high and low impact variables. The results revealed that tourism secured (6.22) 1st rank, shopping secured (6.16) 2nd rank, safety and security (6.14) – 3rd rank, entertainment (5.97) – 4th rank, event management and investment (5.92) – 5th rank, business (5.91) – 7th rank, medical tourism (5.77) – 8th rank, settlement and comfortable living (5.75) – 9th rank, work and gourmet destination (5.70) – 10th rank, education and learning (5.63) – 12th rank, new innovative start-ups (5.61) – 13th rank, and manufacturing hub (5.52) secured the last position i.e., 14th rank. It is evident that tourism, shopping, and safety and security aspects found to have better impact over residents' perception towards UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence on the aforesaid aspects in the year 2030. Further analysis done to find the high and low impact variables influencing residents' perception towards UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030, it is identified that

entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, business, and investment elicit high perception, whereas, work, settlement and comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, manufacturing hub, gourmet destination and medical tourism elicit a low perception among residents' towards UAE becoming place/destination of excellence in the year 2030. present status. Therefore, it is evident from the above results that respondents are positive about UAE becoming place/destination of excellence in the year 2030 on the following aspects such as entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, business, investment, etc. and other variables found to elicit a low perception (Figure 3). It is imperative to notice that respondents are positive about UAE becoming place/destination of excellence for business and investment in the year 2030 whilst comparing to the present status. However, medical tourism was found to elicit a low perception whilst comparing to the present status.

Figure 3 Modelling of high to low impact variables over residents' perception towards future status of country i.e., UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030
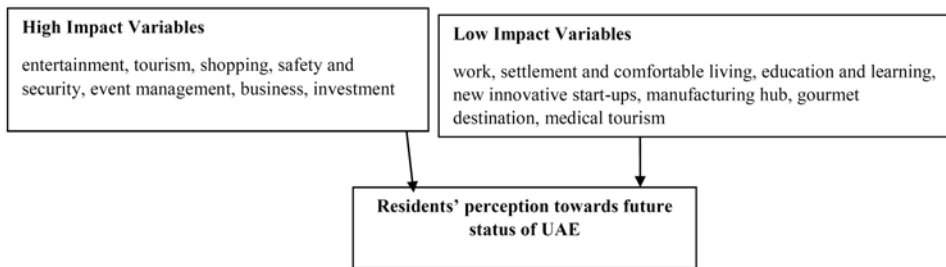
7 Conclusions and implications of the study

The study has been attempted to find the variables that impact residents' perception towards present and future (year 2030) status of a country i.e., UAE. The pertinent variables have been found through extensive literature review and focus group study among multi ethnic respondents. The study is very unique and novel in terms of identifying and measuring the impact of the selected variables over residents' perception (present and future) towards a country i.e., United Arab Emirates. UAE is an unique country houses extremely diversified population from different corners of the world. Around 90% of the population are expatriates and only 10% are nationals. Such diversified country rely on its residents i.e., mostly expatriates to work and contribute to the multi-facet development of the country i.e., UAE. In order to find such contribution and perception of expatriates, multi-diversified variables needed to be identified and measure the perception of residents. The measurement of perception does not only focus on present situation, it also needs to be focus on the future aspects of the country in line with the strategic plan developed by UAE Government i.e., 2030. Thus, the study aimed to identify the perception of residents including nationals about present and future aspects of the country through selected variables representing different facets of a country such as work, commencing new businesses, investment, installing manufacturing plants, commencing new innovative startups, settlement and comfortable living, safety and

security, entertainment, shopping, tourism, event management, medical tourism, etc. and test the influence of the same over residents' perception towards present and future (year 2030) of UAE. The study selected and tested the impact of variables over residents' perception towards UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030. The study was conducted among the residents belong different ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle, South Asia including UAE nationals. The study revealed that all the selected variables were found to have a positive impact (through t-test) over residents' perception towards the present and future status of UAE. The outcomes were consistent with hypotheses set for the study i.e., H1 and H2. The outcomes of hypotheses test proved that residents shown positive perception towards UAE (present and future i.e., 2030). However, in order to find the degree of impacting variables of over such perception of residents i.e., present and future, construct analysis modelling has been used. Such utilisation would provide the high and low impact variables over residents' perception, thus enabling the pertinent government agencies and policy makers to focus on such variables to work on. With reference to assessing the high and low impact variables over residents' present perception towards UAE, the results that following aspects such as entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, medical tourism, etc. elicit higher perception among the residents' towards UAE's present status. However, the following aspects such as investment, work, business, settlement and comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, manufacturing hub, gourmet destination, etc. elicit a lower perception among residents' towards UAE's present status. It clearly revealed the present perception of UAE residents towards the selected aspects. The residents shown higher present perception towards UAE as a place for entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, and medical tourism. Such perception would provide a much needed cue to the government agencies and policy makers to work on to uphold the perception. The outcomes also revealed the lower present perception towards UAE as a place for investment, work, business, settlement and comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative startups, manufacturing hub and gourmet destination. Such results would enable the pertinent agencies to work on to develop such areas. The study further assessed the future perception of residents towards UAE as place of excellent on the following variables in the year 2030 in line with strategic plan. The results revealed that the residents' shown higher perception towards future aspects of UAE as place of excellence in the year 2030. Such variables are entertainment, tourism, shopping, safety and security, event management, business, and investment. Whilst comparing the present and future perception of residents towards UAE, it has been found the positive perception towards UAE as a place of excellence for business and investment in the year 2030. It has been a significant discovery and positive perception of residents to envision UAE to become a place of excellence for business and investment. Such discovery has showcased the faith of the residents towards a country in future. However, whilst comparing the present and future perception of residents with regard to variables elicit lower perception, it has been found that work, settlement and comfortable living, education and learning, new innovative start-ups, manufacturing hub, gourmet destination and medical tourism elicit a low perception. Such a discovery would enable the policy makers to work on those areas to develop in the future in align with strategic plan 2030. It is vital to note that respondents are positive about UAE becoming place/destination of excellence for

business and investment in the year 2030 whilst comparing present status. However, medical tourism found to elicit a low perception whilst comparing present status. The outcomes of the study found to be responses from multi-ethnic groups such as America, Europe, Africa, Middle, South Asia including UAE nationals. Such unique outcome represented by a highly diversified group would provide a cue and direction to the future researchers to embark on a study representing multi-ethnic groups with reference to find the perception towards several aspects. The overall outcomes would provide a much needed cue and direction to the policy makers, pertinent government institutions and agencies, corporate world, etc. that would benefit from the aforesaid outcomes with reference to understand residents' perception towards UAE i.e., present status and about future i.e., UAE becoming a place/destination of excellence in the year 2030. The results would pave a way to open vistas of research in this area i.e., learning the perception of residents/nationals/citizens towards present and future status of a country which found to be a gap existing through review of literature. Given the outcomes, the policy makers and stake holders may work out an effective strategic plan to make UAE a place/destination of excellence in all the selected areas now and in the years to come.

8 Limitations and further scope of the study

The study focused on finding residents' perception towards a country with reference to UAE related to different aspects. The study was conducted with the motive of identifying the residents' views about UAE a place of excellence on different aspects at present and in future. The study was conducted among residents belong to multi ethnicity (90% of UAE population are expatriates from different ethnic groups) groups. The study underwent several challenges related to finding the mix of respondents belong to different ethnic groups. The study encountered several issues related to the respondents visualising perception on future aspects related UAE, however, they were able to provide pertinent and requisite data to provide useful outcomes. The study unearthed the residents' perception towards UAE (present and future) related to different aspects. The study focused on ascertaining residents' perception about UAE as a place of excellence on several aspects selected from study. The study found the perception of residents towards certain aspects, however, did not focus on finding the reasons influenced their perception to do so. Therefore, further research might focus on finding the reasons that would influence residents' perception. Moreover, specific aspect could be considered as a theme of research.

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Annexure

Collection tool

Please state your agreement on UAE an attractive destination for the following aspects (7 – completely agree, 6 – somewhat agree, 5 – just agree, 4 neutral, 3 – just disagree, 2 – somewhat disagree, 1 – completely disagree).

S. no	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	State your valuable opinion on UAE a good place for entertainment? (entertainment)							
2	State your valuable opinion on UAE a safe for place for investment? (investment)							
3	State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for tourism? (tourism)							
4	State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for shopping? (shopping)							
5	State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination to work and make money? (work)							
6	State your valuable opinion on UAE a safe destination to do business and make money? (business)							
7	State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for settling and comfortable living? (settlement and comfortable living)							
8	State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for higher education learning? (education and learning)							
9	State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for commencing new innovative start-ups? (new innovative start-ups)							
10	State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for commencing large scale manufacturing units (manufacturing hub)							
11	State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination to explore culinary adventure i.e., availability of different cuisines from all over the world? (gourmet destination)							
12	State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination to lead a secure life? (safety and security)							
13	State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for availing high quality medical treatment? (medical tourism)							
14	State your valuable opinion on UAE an ideal destination for conducting regional and global level events (event management)							

Kindly state your perception and expectation over achievement of excellence by UAE in the following areas in 2030 (7 – completely agree, 6 – somewhat agree, 5 – just agree, 4 neutral, 3 – just disagree, 2 – somewhat disagree, 1 – completely disagree).

S. no	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Place of excellence: entertainment							
2	Place of excellence :investment							
3	Place of excellence: tourism							
4	Place of excellence : shopping							
5	Place of excellence: work and earn money							
6	Place of excellence: commence and running new businesses							
7	Place of excellence :settlement and comfortable living							
8	Place of excellence: higher education and learning							
9	Place of excellence : commencing and running new innovative start-ups							
10	Place of excellence: commencing and operating larger scale manufacturing plants (manufacturing hub)							
11	Place of excellence: housing BEST restaurants in the world (gourmet destination)							
12	Place of excellence: lead a safe and secure life (safety and security)							
13	Place of excellence: availing high quality medical treatment (medical tourism)							
14	Place of excellence: conducting regional and global events (event management)							

Thank you very much for your valuable time and cooperation.

One sample t test – present perception of residents towards UAE

	One-sample test					
	Test value = 4					
					99% confidence interval of the difference	
	t	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*	*Lower*	*Upper*
State your valuable opinion on UAE a good place for entertainment? (entertainment)	18.675	212	.000	1.74178	1.4994	1.9842
State your valuable opinion on UAE a safe for place for investment? (investment)	17.539	212	.000	1.58685	1.3517	1.8220
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for tourism? (tourism)	22.035	212	.000	2.00000	1.7641	2.2359

One sample t test – present perception of residents towards UAE (continued)

				One-sample test		
				Test value = 4		
					99% confidence interval of the difference	
	t	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*	*Lower*	*Upper*
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for shopping? (shopping)	23.002	212	.000	1.97183	1.7490	2.1946
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination to work and make money? (work)	13.326	212	.000	1.27700	1.0279	1.5261
State your valuable opinion on UAE a safe destination to do business and make money? (business)	18.060	212	.000	1.56338	1.3384	1.7884
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for settling and comfortable living? (settlement and comfortable living)	16.761	212	.000	1.55869	1.3170	1.8004
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for higher education learning? (education and learning)	15.717	212	.000	1.45070	1.2108	1.6906
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for commencing new innovative start-ups? (new innovative start-ups)	17.681	212	.000	1.54930	1.3215	1.7771
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for commencing large scale manufacturing units (manufacturing hub)	12.147	212	.000	1.13615	.8930	1.3793
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination to explore culinary adventure i.e., availability of different cuisines from all over the world? (gourmet destination)	17.468	212	.000	1.53991	1.3108	1.7690
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination to lead a secure life? (safety and security)	23.090	212	.000	1.95775	1.7374	2.1781
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for availing high quality medical treatment? (medical tourism)	18.736	212	.000	1.66667	1.4354	1.8979
State your valuable opinion on UAE an ideal destination for conducting regional and global level events (event management)	19.410	212	.000	1.78873	1.5492	2.0283

One sample t test – future perception of residents towards UAE

	One-sample test					
	Test value = 4					
	t	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*	*99% confidence interval of the difference*	
					Lower	*Upper*
State your valuable opinion on UAE a good place for entertainment? (entertainment)	22.028	212	.000	1.97183	1.7392	2.2045
State your valuable opinion on UAE a safe for place for investment? (investment)	24.059	212	.000	1.92019	1.7127	2.1276
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for tourism? (tourism)	29.261	212	.000	2.22535	2.0277	2.4230
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for shopping? (shopping)	25.850	212	.000	2.16901	1.9509	2.3871
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination to work and make money? (work)	19.067	212	.000	1.69953	1.4678	1.9312
State your valuable opinion on UAE a safe destination to do business and make money? (business)	6.369	212	.000	1.91549	1.1338	2.6972
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for settling and comfortable living? (settlement and comfortable living)	18.800	212	.000	1.75117	1.5091	1.9933
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for higher education learning? (education and learning)	16.729	212	.000	1.63850	1.3839	1.8931
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for commencing new innovative start-ups? (new innovative start-ups)	18.933	212	.000	1.61033	1.3893	1.8314
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination for commencing large scale manufacturing units (manufacturing hub)	18.037	212	.000	1.52113	1.3019	1.7403
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination to explore culinary adventure i.e., availability of different cuisines from all over the world? (gourmet destination)	19.918	212	.000	1.69953	1.4777	1.9213

One sample t test – future perception of residents towards UAE (continued)

	One-sample test					
	Test value = 4					
	t	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*	*99% confidence interval of the difference*	
					Lower	*Upper*
State your valuable opinion on UAE an appropriate destination to lead a secure life? (safety and security)	26.725	212	.000	2.14085	1.9326	2.3491
State your valuable opinion on UAE an attractive destination for availing high quality medical treatment? (medical tourism)	21.182	212	.000	1.77934	1.5610	1.9977
State your valuable opinion on UAE an ideal destination for conducting regional and global level events (event management)	23.494	212	.000	1.92019	1.7077	2.1326