

A Tourism and Hospitality Education Management Model: The Case of the Tourism Department of Sultan Qaboos University

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Abstract

The tourism and hospitality education is a branch of the overall tourism and hospitality industry that is dedicated to providing the industry with well educated, adequately trained, and committed workforce. The Tourism Department at the College of Arts and Social Sciences (Sultan Qaboos University), Oman, has been providing the Omani society with undergraduate tourism and hospitality educational services since Fall 2001. Even though Tourism Department graduates are not facing any employment concerns, fluctuation in the number of enrollees and graduates, however, has been a significant characteristic since the inception of the program. Due to cultural and societal issues, and market needs, the program specializations and study plans were changed and amended. To assure sustainability of the program, several tactical and strategic decisions have been made, notably that the program has received accreditation from two prestigious international accreditation institutions (UNWTO-TedQual certification and the Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programs-AQAS), which mark two major milestones in the educational journey of the Tourism Department. The current study, thus, aims to provide a tourism and hospitality education management model based on the Tourism Department of Sultan Qaboos University experience. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were identified: to analyze students in - graduates out matrix, to assess graduates' employment trends, and to demonstrate the department educational and management framework. This study sheds light on the educational model created and followed by the Tourism Department, in an effort to provide a tourism and hospitality education management model, that would help educators and administrators of tourism and hospitality academic programs.

Keywords: Tourism, Hospitality, Education, UNWTO-TedQual, AQAS, Oman, SQU

Introduction

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) contributes to the development of tourism in the Sultanate of Oman through its Tourism Department in the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS). The Department offers a BA Degree program in Tourism (Tourism Management - Hospitality Management - Tourism Guidance) that commenced in fall 2001. The program aims to graduate qualified personnel to work in the various fields of tourism and hospitality.

Quality is a major conviction for SQU, CASS and the Tourism Department. In May 2013, a significant step was made on the Department's long trajectory of educational excellence and leadership. This step was the Department's reception of the UNWTO TedQual certification for its undergraduate program as the first Tourism Department in the Middle East to receive this recognition. An achievement that continued with a three-year renewal from 2015 till 2018. On its quest for academic excellence, in 2016, the department applied for another accreditation from the Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programs (AQAS).

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Once again, success was achieved, and the department got its undergraduate program accredited for 5 years from 23 August 2016 till 30 September 2021. The current study, thus, aims to provide a tourism and hospitality education management model based on the Tourism Department of Sultan Qaboos University experience. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were identified: to analyze students in - graduates out matrix, to assess graduates' employment trends, and to demonstrate the department educational and management framework. Taken together, these factors will shed light on the educational model created and followed by the Tourism Department.

Literature Review

Competitiveness in tourism depends not only upon the availability of tourism resources and hotel offering, but equally important upon properly and adequately educated personnel and managers. To increase the quality and competitiveness; it is necessary to increase the number of highly educated human resources in all tourism fields (Balčdigara et al., 2011; Bartoluci et al., 2014). Higher education certainly plays a major role in this endeavor (Lee et al., 2008, Lo et al., 2014).

The development of tourism and hospitality degree programs went through stages: In the 1970s the progress was slow, followed by accelerated progress in the 1980s, and significant development since the 1990s till now (Breakey and Smith, 2008). Such developmental stages varied according to the country, national educational system, and tourism industry framework. In many countries, tourism education has developed from training designed to meet the skills needs of the local hotel and restaurant industries through a process of academic and professional evolution in response to both industry and student demand (Baum, 2005).

Universities missions are based on learning and exploration. Academics are involved in teaching, research, and service to the community. An academic department must operate within the university resourcing policy and within the global educational system, research and economic environment (Ringwood et al., 2005; Coates and Goedgebuure, 2012).

Tourism and hospitality related programs at universities face a dilemma, they must adhere to traditional academic competences to match other business-related bachelor degree programs while at the same time, must consider the industry needs as they prepare future employees and managers (Harper et al., 2005; Raybould and Wilkins, 2005; Dawson, 2014).

Employability is an important factor that affects future students' enrolment for an academic program (Jauhari, 2013). Higher education institutions are under pressure by political and educational bodies to prepare students to be employable. Those institutions are expected to use all means and strategies that improve students' employability chances (Harvey, 2010).

The aim of tourism and hospitality related education is to satisfy industry with qualified graduates who are capable of handling industry related issues professionally (Enz et al., 1993). If the curriculum was designed mainly from academic viewpoint disregarding the industry dynamic environment this would lead to a disagreement between industry affiliates and academics on subjects taught to students (Zhang et al., 2001; Li and Li, 2013). The term curriculum is used to refer to the contract between stakeholders and educational institution with regard to learners' educational experiences (Tsui, 2009). There is a need to remedy the gap between academia and the industry to avoid discrepancies in expectations and perceptions of both sides (Harkison et al., 2011).

Universities are constrained by rules and regulations which hinders the ability to accommodate the fast changes in the tourism environment. The simplest change to a study plan would involve, proposals, committee reviews, it is a long and time-consuming process, however it is worthwhile (Quain et al., 2014). Curriculum revision is a cycle that entails a number of interrelated parts including needs analysis, goals setting, implementation and evaluation of programs (Kirkgoz, 2009).

In the United States, during the eighties and the early nineties, most programs were operation skills oriented. A significant change happened during the past decade where university hospitality and tourism management programs have differentiated themselves from technical colleges by offering both operational and management related courses as part of the curriculum. This approach is intended to make graduates more attractive to prospective employers (Rappole, 2000).

Educational institutions must concentrate on recruiting students who intend to complete degrees and commit to an industry career. A high attrition rate negatively affects the educational institution ability to achieve its mission (Astin, 1993; Rudd et al., 2014). Undergraduate student attrition is a condition generated by students who enroll and fail to complete their studies (Tinto, 1982; Martínez et al., 2015). In the same vein, studies declare that less than half of the graduates ever enter the tourism industry even though they have obtained a higher professional education, which aims to prepare them to pursue such a career (King et al., 2003).

The career decisions of tourism and hospitality students and their intention to join the industry after graduation is a major issue. On one hand, they do not necessarily choose to work in tourism after they graduate even though tourism management programs are preparing students for a career in the industry. On the other hand, graduates may not commit to the industry for the long term even if their career starting point was in tourism, thus resulting in a higher than average attrition rate. The consequences are unfavorable, the industry may face a severe shortage of qualified employees in the future, particularly at the management level (King et al., 2003; Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Lo et al., 2014).

Several issues such as: Internship experience and family influence shape the commitment of students and graduates to a career in the industry (Atef and Al-Balushi, 2017a). Researchers who have studied the perceptions of undergraduate tourism and hospitality management students have found that students without work experience had neither a favorable nor an unfavorable perception of tourism and hospitality careers. More importantly, students who completed internship and related work experiences in college had negative perceptions when they experienced irregular working hours, lacked job security, received low pay, and lacked development opportunities (Casado, 1992; Roney and Öztin, 2007; Lu and Adler, 2009). Other researchers show that successful internship practices enhance the interns' intentions to pursue hospitality careers upon their graduation (Busby, 2003; Jauhari and Manaktola, 2006; Chen and Shen, 2012).

Assessing the influence of parents and family on individual's career path was a concern for some researchers. Young people form many of their attitudes about work and career from their interactions with people surrounding them, the most influential forces in high school students' career decision are parents and family (combined), but friends, teachers, and counselors were much less important in formatting student attitudes and career choices (Cothran and Combrink, 1999). However, level of influence and involvement of family can vary, offering both positive and negative influences. Lack of family involvement in the career choice process can be of influence on youth inability to make decisions (Lankard, 1995; Haven and Botterill, 2005; Ferry, 2006).

There is an escalating attention on non-traditional graduate employment specially towards entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Connor and Shaw, 2008; Hart and Barratt, 2009; Wilton, 2011; Knight and Mantz, 2013; Dias et al., 2016a, 2016b). However, it has been argued that hospitality students favor large organizations employment over SME employment (Jenkins, 2001; Pittaway and Thedham, 2005; Nachmias et al., 2014). The study done by Atef and Al-Balushi (2015) to assess entrepreneurial intentions among students in the Tourism Department of Sultan Qaboos University (College of Arts and Social Sciences), located in the Sultanate of Oman showed that due to the limited working hours and the substantial benefits associated; respondents prefer to join the labor market in the government (public) sector than the private sector, and few of them head towards entrepreneurship (self-employment).

In their comparative study of hospitality and tourism graduates in Australia and Hong Kong King et al. (2003) found that up to half of all graduates will either never enter the industry or drop-out within a few years. This fact is a major issue for academic program managers and to the offered study plans. Should study plans focus on specialized tourism and hospitality courses, knowing that these courses may not be supportive to the careers of half of the graduates, or should the focus be on more generic business courses that could benefit graduates seeking employment in the industry or elsewhere?

There is a distinction between tourism programs which offer a general approach to Tourism education (education about tourism) and those which deal with the industry operational aspects (education for tourism) (Stuart-Hoyle, 2003).

Researchers argue that curricula need to have a broader perspective, studies should be about tourism rather than for tourism, and that the vocational emphasis should not prevail (Ryan, 1995; Gilbert and Guerrier, 1997; Chen and Groves, 1999; Stuart, 2002; Shaikh and Syed, 2013). Biggs and Tang (2007) commented that the focus should be changed from the traditional viewpoint of curricula to a more innovative one that can cope with the escalating rhythm of the industry.

Methodology

The current study, thus, aims to provide a tourism and hospitality education management model based on the Tourism Department of Sultan Qaboos University experience. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were identified: to analyze students in - graduates out matrix, to assess graduates' employment trends, and to demonstrate the department educational and management framework.

A survey was conducted to assess the current employment status of the department graduates. Secondary data about the Tourism Department were collected from deanship of admission and registration statistical reports. Data were tabulated and analyzed in such a way that set forth the major findings from the survey and the secondary data. Furthermore, tactical and strategic decisions made by the department management were interpreted.

Secondary research

Secondary data were collected from Deanship of Admission and Registration statistical reports on the Tourism Department in Spring 2016. Reports included many data fields:

- Cohort (Year Joined SQU)
- Credit Hours (Registered/Gained)
- Governorate
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Graduation Year (Actual/Expected)
- Nationality
- Specialization
- Student Status (Registered/Graduated/Dismissed)

Data were tabulated, organized, analyzed, and interpreted. General scientific deduction and analysis methods were used to interpret the secondary data.

Primary research

A survey was conducted in Spring 2016 to assess the current employment status of the department graduates, based on the Deanship of Admission and Registration documentation the graduates of three graduated cohorts were surveyed (2013, 2014, and 2015). Those cohorts were chosen because they had the time to be employed and settle in a position. To assure maximum reliability; phone calls and personal meetings were the means used to collect employment data. Information of 75 out of 86 graduates were reached.

Discussion

Students enrollment trends

Fluctuation in the number of enrollees has been a significant characteristic since the inception of the tourism undergraduate program, see Table 1.

Table 1: Tourism Department Enrollees (Year joined SQU 1998 - 2015)

Cohort (Year Joined SQU)	Male	Female	Frequency
1998	1	1	2
1999	3	2	5
2000	9	1	10
2001	22	15	37
2002	30	11	41
2003	40	18	58
2004	35	21	56
2005	51	12	63
2006	24	8	32
2007	42	7	49
2008	14	18	32
2009	11	7	18
2010	24	6	30
2011	31	11	42
2012	33	5	38
2013	25	4	29
2014	22	7	29
2015	30	9	39
Total	447	163	610

The department offers a BA degree program in tourism (Tourism Management - Hospitality Management - Tourism Guidance) that commenced in fall 2001. Some of the first cohorts' joiners were transferees from other departments and colleges (Some Joined SQU in 1998, 1999, and 2000). This phenomenon continued with varying numbers on yearly basis, till recently it became a backdoor to increase the number of program enrollees. The decision to accept those students and in what numbers is based on the program seat availability and faculty availability, in addition to getting the approval of both CASS dean and Tourism Department head (HOD), this takes place during the monthly college board meeting. The major drawback of accepting transferees is that they have less years left to accomplish their studies at the university or else they will be expelled, a case that demands more attention and close monitoring of students' progress in the study plan by both academic advisors and the department administration.

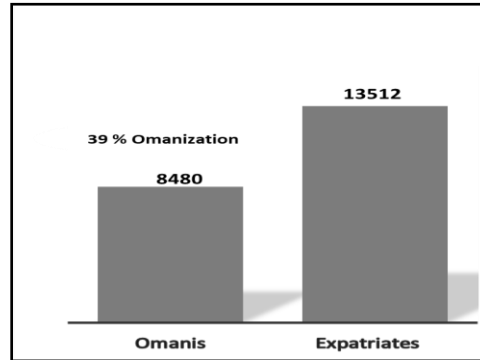
According to the study on hand (See Table 2) the number of department students reached 610 in 2015 of whom 166 are registered and 395 graduated, the overall number of department joiners/graduates is not enough to fulfill the escalating demand for Omani manpower by the industry, taking into account that a significant number of the graduates never join the industry. Undergraduate student attrition can be considered a measure of the efficiency and quality of higher education institutions (De Vries et al., 2011), eight percent attrition rate (49 students) is not much when spread on a time span of 15 years (2001-2015).

Table 2: Students Status and Gender (Year joined SQU 1998 - 2015)

Student Status (Year joined SQU 1998 - 2015)	Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Registered	132	34	166	27 %
Graduated	277	118	395	65 %
Dismissed	38	11	49	8 %
Total	447	163	610	

It is worth noting that expatriates dominate the tourism and hospitality workforce in Oman (Omani Ministry of Manpower, 2016), see Figure 1. The major drawback of such trend is the inability to achieve the Omanization policy planned figures (Atef and Al-Balushi, 2017a). The Omanization or Localization policy has been in effect with Oman since 1988, with the aim of “Omanizing” the jobs by replacing expatriates with qualified Omani manpower (Omani Ministry of Information, 2002).

Figure 1: Tourism and Hospitality Workforce (2015)



Source: Omani Ministry of Manpower, 2016

Affected by culture and perceptions held by the Omani community towards tourism the number of Male enrollees is more than that of Females (See Table 2 above). It is worth noting that the students' choice of the tourism discipline is negatively affected by perceptions held by Omani families and community in general towards tourism and hospitality business. Atef and Al-Balushi (2017a) explained that:

- The Omani society attitude towards employment in the tourism and hospitality sector is unfavorable and negatively affects the number of Omanis joining the industry.
- Some of the families are conservative to the extent that they object to their members working in hotels.
- Omanis are very attached to their families and profoundly consider the impacts or the consequences of their career choices on their families.

Admission criteria vs enrolment fluctuation trend

Admission to the Tourism Department relies upon SQU admission regulations and rules:

- SQU admits the best students from high school graduates strictly by merit
- Students are distributed to departments based on the following:
 1. Student interests. Based on community awareness, employability, and appreciation of different disciplines and specialization, students choose departments/programs
 2. Number of seats available in the program
 3. English placement test results
- The Tourism Department enrolls students after passing the foundation program and achieving level six in English. The Tourism Department is a bi-lingual department where the teaching language of the majority of the study plan courses is English except for only two courses (Tourism Authorities and Organizations - Tourism and Hospitality Legislation) where the teaching language is Arabic.
- The enrolment fluctuation trend is due to two factors:
 1. Allowing some Departments - in the college - to enroll more students than planned.
 2. The community resistance of tourism as a lucrative career. This resistance is still evident despite the government's continued efforts to spread awareness.
- Facing the enrolment fluctuation issue requires the following actions:
 1. Switch the students' distribution system in the college to a percentage system aiming to ensure a balanced distribution between different academic departments.
 2. Community awareness campaigns to highlight the value of working in the tourism sector.

Program development

The undergraduate study plan was initially formulated in 2001, before being modified and updated twice:

1. In 2007 the study plan was modified to what is known as “2007 study plan”, modifications were courses related.
2. In 2010 the study plan was modified to what is known as “2010 study plan”. Major amendments were introduced regarding the courses, credit hours, and plan structure. This study plan considered the balance between operational and managerial courses with an emphasis on languages (6 levels instead of only 4) and industry practical experience acquisition (Internship courses and Practical Courses).

In academic year 2013-2014, the Tourism Department reformulated the following as part of the continuous improvement process adopted:

1. Tourism Department vision, mission, objectives
2. Tourism undergraduate program vision, mission, objectives, and outcomes

This was implemented taking into consideration four facts:

1. Affiliation to SQU and CASS
2. Affiliation to the tourism and hospitality disciplines
3. Accreditation by the UNWTO.TedQual program
4. Employment market needs and trends

Tourism Department undergraduate study plan (2010 study plan)

At the time being, students registering in the tourism undergraduate program study for four years (eight semesters). The undergraduate academic plan is composed of 120 credit hours, see Table 3, including seven course categories as follows:

Table 3: Course Category and Credit Hours

	Course Category	Credit Hours
1	University Requirements	6
2	University Electives	6
3	College Requirements	11
4	College Electives	3
5	Major Requirements	34
6	Major Electives (6 course levels of the chosen foreign language and 2 Elective Courses)	24
7	Specialization Requirements	36
Total		120

All registered students should study the “Major Requirements” courses, see Table 4, which include 12 courses (34 credit hours) regardless of their specific specialization. Students usually receive these courses during their first four semesters in the department.

Table 4: Major Requirements (34 Cr)

TOURISM MANAGEMENT & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	
COURSE	
1	Introduction to Tourism
2	Tourism Authorities and Organizations (ARABIC)
3	Introduction to Tourism Guidance
4	Introduction to Hospitality
5	Tourism and Hospitality Legislation (ARABIC)
6	Tourist Behavior
7	Research Methodology in Tourism and Hospitality
8	Tourism Resources in Oman
9	Communication Skills for Tourism English I
10	Communication Skills for Tourism English II
11	Summer Internship (1)
12	Summer Internship (2)

After finishing their initial four semesters, students will then proceed toward receiving the “Specialization Requirements” courses, see Table 5, which include 12 courses (36 credit hours) in one of the active department specializations (Tourism Management & Hospitality Management) for four semesters.

Table 5: Specialization Requirements (36 Cr)

	TOURISM MANAGEMENT	HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
	COURSE	
1	Tourism Companies and Travel Agencies Operations	Hospitality Management
2	Airlines Operations and Management	Food Production
3	Economics of Tourism	Service in Hospitality
4	Event Management	Front Office Operations and management
5	IT Applications for Tourism	IT Applications for Hospitality
6	Tourism Planning and Development	Housekeeping Operations and Management
7	Managerial Accounting for Tourism	Managerial Accounting for Hospitality
8	Tourism Marketing	Hospitality Marketing
9	Human Resources Management for Tourism and Hospitality	
10	Statistics for Tourism and Hospitality	
11	Feasibility Study of Tourism and Hospitality Projects	
12	Graduation Project	

To complete their study plans, students choose two courses to study from the “Major Electives” courses list, see Table 6. Furthermore, students study 6 course levels of a foreign language where they have the opportunity to choose either French language or German language.

Table 6: Major Electives (6 Cr)

TOURISM MANAGEMENT & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	
COURSE	
1	Adventure Tourism
2	Cargo Operations
3	Club Operations and Management
4	Conventions and Meeting Management
5	Cruise Operations and Management
6	Cultural Heritage Tourism
7	Culture Heritage Management
8	Eco-Tourism
9	Entrepreneurship in tourism
10	Hotel Design and Decor
11	Inflight Catering
12	Interpretation Industry and Tourism
13	Professionalism and Code of Ethics for Tourism and Hospitality
14	Resort Management
15	Risk Management for Tourism
16	Service Quality Management for Tourism and Hospitality
17	Sport Tourism
18	Tourism Destination Marketing
19	Training Management in Hospitality

Analysis of the 12 “Specialization Requirements” courses indicate (See Table 7) they could be classified as:

1. *Operational and Managerial courses*
 - For the Tourism specialization 8 courses are “Managerial”, 2 courses are “Operational”, and 2 courses are “Operational & Managerial”.
 - For the Hospitality specialization 6 courses are “Managerial”, 3 courses are “Operational”, and 3 courses are “Operational & Managerial”.
2. *Courses “For” or “About” Tourism and Hospitality*
 - For the Tourism specialization 6 courses are “For” and the other 6 are “About”.
 - For the Hospitality specialization 7 courses are “For”, 4 courses are “About” and One course is “For & About”.

The balance between “Operational and Managerial” courses and “For” or “About” Tourism and Hospitality courses supports graduates by making them more attractive to prospective employers and helps those who do not intend to pursue a career in the field find employment elsewhere.

Table 7: Specialization Requirements Courses Analysis

Specialization Requirements					
TOURISM MANAGEMENT			HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT		
Tourism Companies and Travel Agencies Operations	F	O	Hospitality Management	F	M
Airlines Operations and Management	F	O&M	Food Production	F	O
Economics of Tourism	A	M	Service in Hospitality	F	O
Event Management	F	M	Front Office Operations and management	F	O&M
IT Applications for Tourism	F	O	IT Applications for Hospitality	F	O
Tourism Planning and Development	F	M	Housekeeping Operations and Management	F	O&M
Managerial Accounting for Tourism	A	M	Managerial Accounting for Hospitality	F&A	M
Tourism Marketing	A	M	Hospitality Marketing	A	M
Human Resources Management for Tourism and Hospitality				A	M
Statistics for Tourism and Hospitality				A	M
Feasibility Study of Tourism and Hospitality Projects				A	M
Graduation Project				F	O&M

Note: F=For, A=About, F&A=For & About, O=Operational, M=Managerial, O&M=Operational & Managerial

Program specializations

The Tourism Department undergraduate program started in 2001 with three specializations:

- Tourism Management
- Hotel Management
- Tourism Guidance

The tourism management specialization has received the highest enrolment figures since the inception of the program, see Table 8. The hospitality management specialization started under the name of “Hotel Management” and, in 2007, changed to “Hospitality Management” due to cultural and societal issues.

In the Arab culture “Hospitality” is an indication of generosity, good manners, and well-being, whereas the word “Hotel” is correlated to some unacceptable practices (Atef and Al-Balushi, 2017a).

The “Tourism Guidance” specialization continued until 2007, then became inactive for lack of enrollees. The reason behind this is that graduates of tourism guidance specialization cannot work as tour guides unless they obtain a “Tour Guide Licence” from the Omani Ministry of Tourism. Tour guides working in Oman must pass an oral exam by the Tour Guide Committee of the Omani Ministry of Tourism, then be granted one of the following license categories (Omani Ministry of Tourism, 2016; Atef and Al-Balushi, 2017b):

- Omani general tour guide
- Omani regional tour guide
- Non-Omani general tour guide
- Non-Omani regional tour guide
- Temporary tour guide

Most of the department students prefer to study tourism management or hospitality management then apply for the tour guide licence and so hit two birds with one stone (Atef and Al-Balushi, 2017a).

Table 8: Students Specialization and Gender (Year joined SQU 1998 - 2015)

Specialization (Year joined SQU 1998 - 2015)	Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Hotel Management	27	4	31	5.1 %
Hospitality management	76	12	88	14.4 %
Tourism Management	207	108	315	51.6 %
Tourism Guidance	13	7	20	3.3 %
Not Yet	86	21	107	17.5 %
Dismissed	38	11	49	8 %
Total	447	163	610	

Program Management and Coordination

The department follows several approaches for management and coordination of the undergraduate program with a focus on five important areas:

1. Teaching (Assessed through students' course and teaching survey)
2. Students (Done by means of academic advising, students' liaison committee)
3. Research and community service (Data found in appraisal of academic staff, yearly department achievements report)
4. Academic coordination
 - A department faculty meeting is held monthly headed by the HOD
 - Inter department steering committees are formulated on yearly basis, all department staff participate in such committees
 - Department members participate in college steering committees as representatives of the Tourism Department
 - The HOD and a faculty member (selected on yearly basis) participate in the monthly college board meeting
 - The HOD participates in the monthly college executive committee meeting (restricted only to dean, assistant deans, and HOD's)
 - An executive follow-up schedule exists to monitor the progress of all tasks at all levels
5. Stakeholders

Information is collected from different sources and stakeholders including but not limited to the following:

 - The department advisory board
 - The SQU / Omani Ministry of Tourism joint committee
 - Participation in the industry official boards and committees
 - Alumni feedback

Using such information, several plans and action plans are set to guide the department progress in areas such as: academic plan development, course enhancements, internship, etc.

Graduates Employment Survey Analysis

Based on the Deanship of Admission and Registration documentation, a survey was conducted to assess the current employment status of graduates of three cohorts (2013, 2014, and 2015). Information of 75 out of 86 were reached, see Table 9 for sample data.

Table 9: Sample Data

Graduation Year	Graduates	Respondents
2013	43	40
2014	22	20
2015	21	15
Total	86	75

Graduates jobs were placed in one of the following employment categories (See Table 10):

- Government Related: Jobs that are related to tourism and hospitality in the government sector
- Government Unrelated: Jobs that are unrelated to tourism and hospitality in the government sector
- Industry Related: Tourism and hospitality industry jobs
- Unrelated: Non-tourism and hospitality jobs
- Unemployed

Even though Tourism Department graduates are not facing any employment concerns they are not directly employment in the industry. It is the aim of any tourism and hospitality educational institution to supply the industry with qualified and committed personnel, but according to the sample only 3 respondents joined the industry, the majority joined the field from the “Government Related” job category, consequently the industry would still depend on expatriates to fulfil employment needs. None of the graduates headed towards entrepreneurship. Due to family obligation 14 female graduates are unemployed and are not seeking employment.

Table 10: Employment Category vs Gender - Specialization

Employment Category	Frequency	Male	Female	Hospitality Management	Tourism Management
Government Related	40	33	7	18	22
Government Unrelated	12	7	5	5	7
Industry Related	3	3	0	2	1
Unrelated	6	3	3	3	3
Unemployed	14	0	14	4	10
Total	75	46	29	32	43

Conclusions

This study sheds light on the educational model created and followed by the Tourism Department, in an effort to provide a tourism and hospitality education management model, that would help educators and administrators of tourism and hospitality academic programs. Based on the analysis of secondary data and the results of primary research it becomes evident that:

- The Tourism Department model demonstrates two main components:
 1. Educational system: Which is guided by SQU policy and regulations.
 2. Management and coordination framework: The Tourism Department follows several approaches for coordinating, monitoring and assuring quality of the undergraduate program vertically and horizontally, represented in the following:
 - Monthly College Board Meeting
 - Monthly College Executive Committee Meeting
 - College Committees Meetings
 - Monthly Department Faculty Meeting
- Students pass by several decision-making phases:
 1. Department/Program Choice:
 - Usually factors such as community awareness, employability, and appreciation of different disciplines and specialization guide students’ decisions.
 - It is of utmost importance to monitor this stage to assure the sustainability of the program and to review on continuous basis the number of enrollees and the factors that guide their study program choices. A very important issue to consider is students commitment to study tourism and hospitality, in some cases students just join a department as a bridge to transfer to another department or even a completely different college as according to SQU policies this is allowed after some conditions regarding number of credit hours studied and GPA achieved are fulfilled.
 2. Specialization Selection
 - This phase takes place after students finish Internship I which is a general training course that familiarizes students with the industry and gives a basis for sound decision regarding specializations choices.

3. Commitment to an Industry Career
 - This phase takes place after students finish Internship II which is a specialized course that gives students a closer perspective of the operation and jobs within the industry branch they chose to study.
 4. Employment Sector Choice
 - Graduates may join any of the following labour market sectors: the government (public) sector, private sector, or entrepreneurship (self-employment). It is important for the department to study graduates' employment trends as an effective means for study plan development.
- Program and faculty performance monitoring and evaluation practices: The relationship between faculty, students, and curriculum is so important that it is be monitored and evaluated on regular basis and on different levels.
 - Program review, evaluation, and development: The whole program is reviewed and evaluated on regular basis and major developments to align study plan with the industry trends are done every five years after a complete student cycle is completed (Graduation of a batch).
 - The Tourism Department faced issues that demanded strategic and tactical action to assure the sustainability of the program.
 - Graduates employment is not a concern but the contribution to industry workforce is limited and entrepreneurial intentions were not apparent through the analysis of graduates' employment patterns.
 - Taking into consideration the industry needs and its dynamic nature, information is collected regularly and through different channels from stakeholders.
 - The tourism undergraduate study plan considers the balance between “Operational” and “Managerial” courses, and “For” or “About” tourism and hospitality courses with an emphasis on languages and industry practical experience acquisition through internship courses and practical courses.
 - The Tourism Department strives to provide an outstanding tourism and hospitality education for its undergraduate program students, according to the international standards.
 - The program was accredited by two prestigious institutions (UNWTO-TedQual certification and the Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programs-AQAS), reflecting the efforts exerted by the department to achieve its mission in an environment the demonstrates concrete adherence to international academic and educational standards.

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