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Assessing the Factors Affecting Entrepreneurial Intentions

The Case of the Tourism Department Students
College of Arts and Social Sciences - Sultan Qaboos University
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ABSTRACT

The growing numbers of youth looking for the right opportunity to join the labour market places great responsibility on graduating education institutions, to reshape education curricula, better align and help bring closer education programs and labour market needs. The aim is to provide young people with the skills and qualifications to successfully join the local, national, and international workforce.

Graduates join the labour market in either government (public) sector or private sector, few of them head towards entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial intention has been a vigorous field of study due to its importance to the development of any economy by means of job and career creation and consequently minimizing the heavy demand on government (public) sector jobs. The study aims to assess the factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions among Tourism Department students - College of Arts and Social Sciences - Sultan Qaboos University - Sultanate of Oman, to achieve the study aim the following objectives were identified:

- Assess entrepreneurial intentions.
- Assess job preference.
- Assess perception of education effect on entrepreneurial intentions.
- Assess entrepreneurship pull factors.
- Assess entrepreneurship push factors.

A questionnaire was used to gather data and measure respondents' perceptions with regard to the subject under investigation.

The findings have shown that the respondents are considering and interested in entrepreneurship and that there are pull and push factors that to varying degrees influence and shape their entrepreneurship intentions.

Respondents reported that the Tourism Department study plan provided the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship moreover it developed their entrepreneurial skills and ability to identify business opportunities.

By shifting the demand towards self-employment rather than government (public) and private sectors; Entrepreneurship would reduce current and future unemployment issues.

Keywords: Labour market, government/public sector, private sector, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial Intention, tourism, hospitality, graduates.

INTRODUCTION

Independent of the stage of economic development, entrepreneurship plays a significant role for the expansion, job creation and overall economic health within a country (Chernyshenko et al., 2013). Simply stated, entrepreneurship is starting one's own business, while an entrepreneur is any individual who starts-up, runs and possibly, grows a new business venture (Humbert & Eileen, 2010).

Interest in entrepreneurship education has increased in recent years, especially in business oriented schools. Today's students are tomorrow's potential entrepreneurs (Basu & Virick, 2008).

Entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly important career option for school and university graduates; there is a broad consensus as to the nature of the pressures on education throughout the world to become more entrepreneurial or enterprising.

Entrepreneurship education is promoted as an effective way to facilitate the transition of a growing graduate population from education into work (Kennedy et al., 2003; Matlay & Westhead, 2005). Entrepreneurship is said to be a function of various factors e.g. personality traits, gender, age, education and training, experience, social and economic conditions, law and order and many other issues (Rittippant et al., 2011; Samuel et al., 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Definition

The definitions for what exactly constitutes entrepreneurship are myriad; Chernyshenko et al. (2013) define entrepreneurship as any attempt at new business or new venture creation. This can include but is not limited to self-employment, the creation of a new business entity or the expansion of an existing business. Furthermore there is no consistency in what defines entrepreneurship. According to Timmons (1994) entrepreneurship is about creating and

building something of value from practically nothing. Some researchers emphasize the importance of factors such as growth and innovation; for Koe et al. (2012) entrepreneurship is defined as a process in which people recognize opportunities, utilize the opportunities through invention and innovation, and eventually gain satisfaction from it.

Entrepreneurship Intentions & Motivations

According to Bird (1988), intentionality can be defined as a state of mind directing a person's attention, experience and action towards a specific goal or a path to achieve something.

Individual entrepreneurial intent is defined as a conviction by a person to set up a new business venture at some point in the future. Those with entrepreneurial intent need not ever actually set up a new business because many personal circumstances and environmental factors may act against this (Thompson, 2009).

A correlation between the level of entrepreneurial intention and the number of management courses taken by students enrolled in non-management programs has been identified (Chen et al., 1998). Moreover entrepreneurship education and training have been found to influence both the current behavior and future intentions of students (Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999; Fayolle, 2006).

Early Entrepreneurial motivations studies focused on traits (tolerance of ambiguity, self-confidence and tolerance of risk). Other factors such as external influences (politics and capital availability), demographic characteristics (gender, age, and education) and social factors (family and community) have been identified as factors influencing entrepreneurial motivation (Summers, 2000). Recent models appear to be intention-based process models (Shapero, 1982) focusing on attitudes and beliefs and how they can predict intentions and behaviors (Segal et al., 2005).

There are several theories on entrepreneurial intention such as (Samuel et al., 2013):

- Self-efficacy and social learning theory (Bandura, 1986 and 1997).
- Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1987 and 1991).
- Model of intention in entrepreneurial situations (Shapero & Sokol, 1982).
- Reitan's (1996) theory based on the combination of the Ajzen and Shapero models.

The theory of planned behavior was used in several empirical studies to approach entrepreneurship from a psychological perspective (Basu & Virick, 2008). According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991), intentions are a function of three factor groups:

- **Attitudes:** A reflection of the individual's perception of a behavior, and the consequences of such behavior.
- **Subjective norms:** Others pressure and influence, customs and traditions that causes an individual to behave in a certain manner.
- **Perceived behavioral control (PBC):** Refers to an individual's self-trust and control capabilities.

According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (1998) every person has the potential and free choice to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. Taking into consideration a set of entrepreneurial behaviour cues, see Table 1. They encompass positive and negative social, economic, and psychological factors (Morrison, 2006).

Table 1: Entrepreneurial behavior cues

	Positive	Negative
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the family • Conducive culture • Supportive networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political/religious displacement • Discrimination • Unsatisfactory position in society
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move towards services • Reversal highly vertically integrated company structures • Phenomenon of "dot.com" business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate downsizing and redundancy • Dissatisfaction with employment opportunities • Discriminatory legislation
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirations of independence, wealth, need to achieve, social mobility etc. 	

Adapted from: Morrison (2006).

People motivations for becoming an entrepreneur are classified into two categories of push and pull factors. Push factors often have negative connotations. Alternatively, pull factors have positive connotations and motivate people to start businesses. There are four key drivers of entrepreneurial motivation (McClelland et al., 2005; Segal et al., 2005; Kirkwood, 2009):

1. Desire for independence which is a pull factor.
2. Monetary motivations, which are pull factors.
3. Work related motivations (unemployment, redundancy, lack of job or career prospects) are usually considered to be push factors.
4. Family-related factors have been found to be important, such as combining waged and domestic labour, family policies and family obligations, and a desire for work-family balance. These factors are often labeled push factors.

In the same vein Rittippant et al. (2011) state that there are 4 main demographic factors (Moderating variables) that have influence on the attitude and aptitude of people who want to start the new business.

1. Gender, which refers to different thoughts between males and females that lead to personal behavior to start-up a new business or not.
2. Family background, describing people who decide to start-up their business and have impetus from family business.
3. Regions and refers to different regions that might possess different perspectives to start-up their new business or not.
4. Educational background in reference to the business program and non-business program students.

Entrepreneurship intentions and motivations terminology may vary; for example Gilad and Levine (1986) and Amit & Muller (1994) refer to “push” vs “pull” entrepreneurship. Some researchers identify a three-fold categorization “opportunity-based” entrepreneurship, “necessity” entrepreneurship, and “lifestyle/family” entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2001). For others entrepreneurship is primarily the result of external environmental factors or the result of human agency (Shane et al., 2003). Hessels et al. (2008) refer to “necessity entrepreneurship”, and Thurik et al. (2008) coin the term “refugee entrepreneurship”.

In practice distinction between entrepreneurship intentions and motivations theories and groups may be blurred, individuals get inconsistently affected by push and pull and external and internal dimensions, in cases self-employment may arise with a particular occupation, such as a construction trade or a profession. Gender may be important as occupational gender segregation may be significant (Dawson & Henley, 2012). Indeed, the concept of an entrepreneur has been shown to be highly gendered, identifying oneself as an entrepreneur appears to have a stronger degree of importance for men (Humbert & Drew, 2010). Although the level of female entrepreneurship appears to be on the rise in many countries, women entrepreneurs are still underrepresented compared to male entrepreneurs. Several factors or barriers account for disparities between male and female entrepreneurial activities (Johansen, 2013):

- Difficulties in obtaining support (institutional, family, financial).
- Fear of failure.
- Self-Assessment entrepreneurial gender gap.
- Unfavorable societal conception of women entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is influencing student entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors. Furthermore, there is a correlation between the proportion of entrepreneurs and the university investment intensity in developing entrepreneurial teaching programs and promoting entrepreneurship as a possible career path (Noel, 2001; Varela & Gimenez, 2001; Fayolle & Gailly, 2004).

Charney & Libecap (2003) point out that approaches to entrepreneurship education have varied across colleges and universities from offering single courses in new business development or business plans preparation to integrated curricula that include marketing, finance, competitive analysis and business plan development. The analysis of entrepreneurship and small business management courses highlighted certain points, see Table 2.

Table 2: Entrepreneurship and small business management courses context

Small Business Management Courses	Entrepreneurship Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the “enterprise” as an economically feasible and profitable unit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target nascent entrepreneurs, small business owner/managers, students and the unemployed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide theoretical and practical coverage of issues relating to planning, implementing and operating small-scale enterprises. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the practicalities and monitoring the production of a “business plan”. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen in the context of normal sales, profits and growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the possibility and desirability of rapid growth, high profits and above average capital gains or returns on investments.

Adapted from: Winslow et al. (1999); Honig (2004); Matlay, (2006).

The aim of entrepreneurship education is to provide graduates with the diverse range of skills required to pursue their career as an entrepreneur. As entrepreneurship is synonymous with self-employed, it is believed to be an effective strategy in handling the issue of employability, particularly among the youths (Nabi & Holdeni, 2008; Koe et al., 2012).

Education Institutions curricula need to equip graduates more effectively for the diverse range of skills required to manage this type of work (Scase, 2000; Gibb & Hannon, 2006; Moreland, 2006).

Surprisingly, most graduates go about looking for employment in government institutions and private institutions after they have gone through entrepreneurship courses (Nabi & Holdeni, 2008).

In order to increase participation in entrepreneurial activities, there is a need to identify the underlying factors affecting entrepreneurial behavior and identify ways to stimulate entrepreneurial intentions (Turker & Selcuk, 2008) among those who do not appear to be “Born Entrepreneurs”. Entrepreneurs are seemingly different from their fellow citizens in terms of their tendency to take risks, their tolerance for ambiguity and their motivation for self-employment (Dabic et al., 2012).

BACKGROUND

Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC: Kingdom of Bahrain, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) region. GCC policymakers would like nothing better than to shift more of their workforces away from government sector jobs and into fast-growing new industries outside of oil, but they have had a hard time doing so, see Figure 1, despite recent efforts at diversification, few non-energy businesses are really thriving in the GCC (Shediac & Samman, 2010).

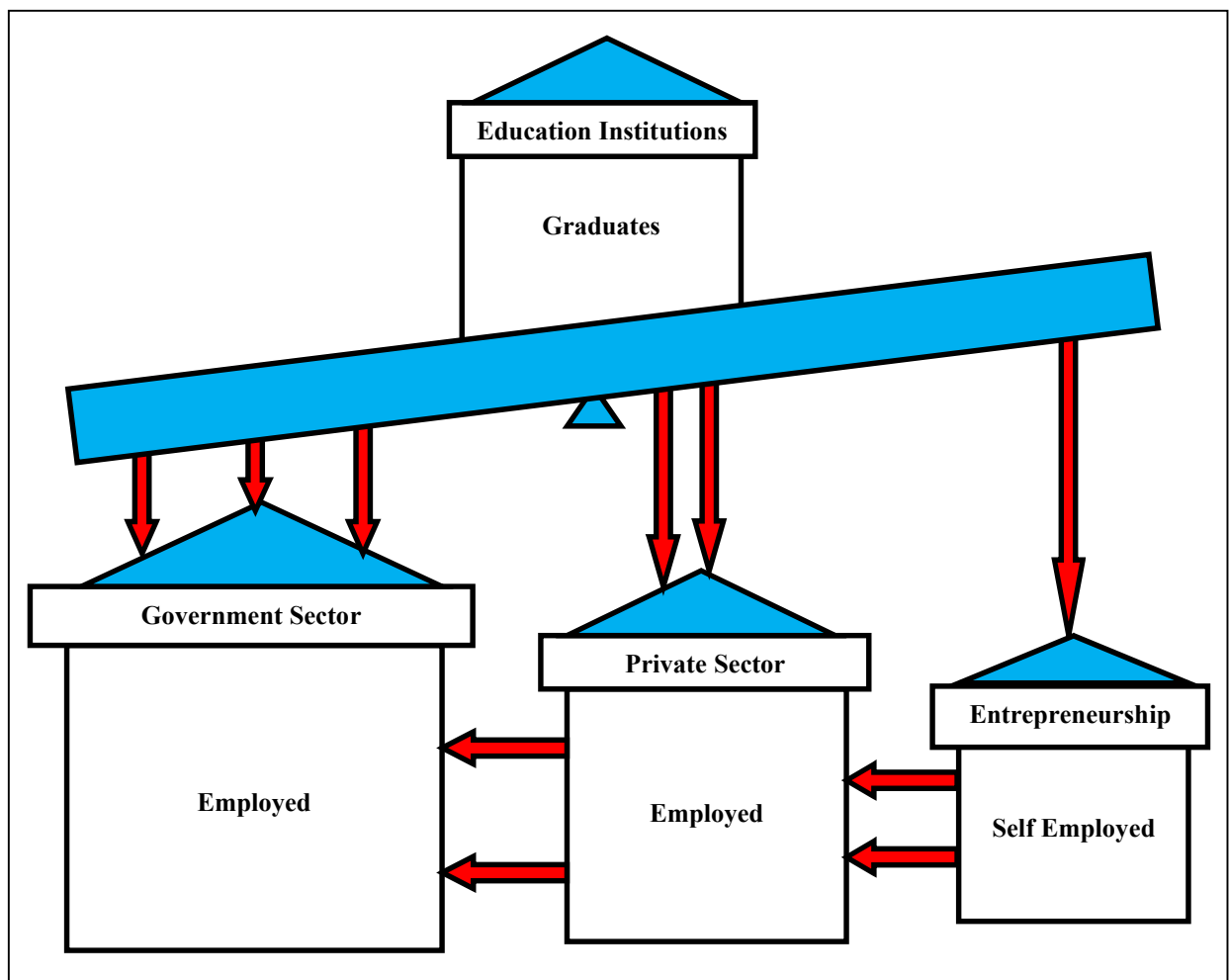


Figure 1 Workforces Current Trend

The Sultanate of Oman has attempted to direct development through a series of five-year plans, the first of which was launched in 1976. The latest is the Eighth Five-Year

Development Plan (2011–2015), which was announced on 2 January 2011. Each five-year plan is nested within a long-term development strategy, the first covering the period 1970–95, and the second, covering the period 1996–2020, is normally referred to as Vision 2020 (MONE, 2007; NCSI; 2013).

Vision 2020 plan seeks diversification, industrialization, privatization and increased integration into the global economy. In the current plan, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in tourism, industry, agriculture and fisheries are encouraged in order to develop the private sector role in the national economy. SMEs are furthermore seen as a vehicle to attract domestic and foreign private investments and hence raise the private sector's share in GDP and the provision of new work opportunities, particularly for the national workforce. The Eighth Five-Year Plan expects to generate 40,000 to 55,000 new jobs a year. (MONE, 2007; Hvidt, 2013; NCSI, 2013).

The GCC countries need to reduce the leading role of the public sector in their economies by promoting the growth of the private sector, and fostering entrepreneurship, see Figure 2. As such, the aim is to increase productivity in the private sector, and to create an environment which is conducive to entrepreneurship, and which will create knowledge-based and high-value-adding companies and economic activities, see Figure 2. Entrepreneurship will fortify the base of small and medium-sized enterprises and consequently would minimize the heavy demand on government sector jobs (Shediac & Samman, 2010; Hvidt, 2013).

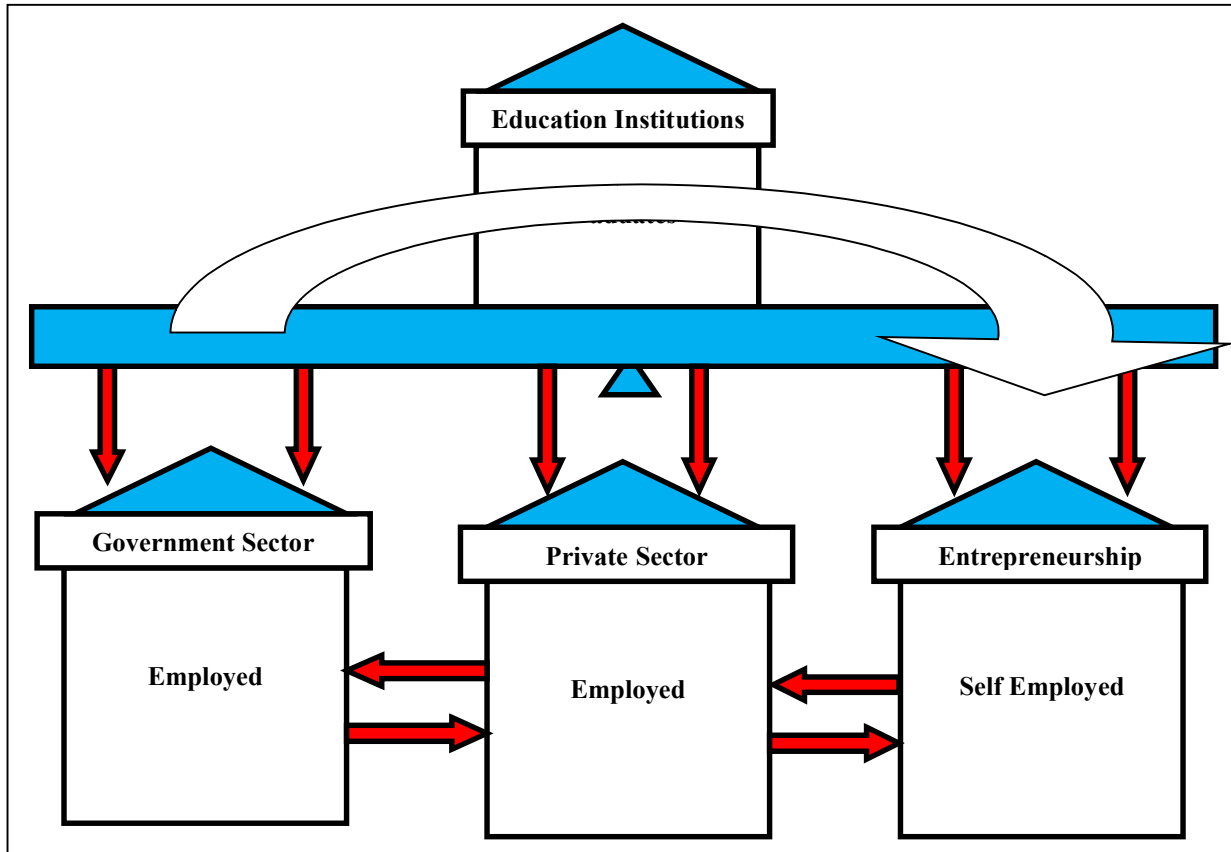


Figure 2 Workforces Optimum Trend

A study was done by Chernyshenko et al. (2013) to estimate the entrepreneurial participation in 25 countries; see Table 3. A higher rate indicates a greater percentage of respondents that intend to start a business within the next 3 years. The study survey utilized phone landlines to interview a representative sample of at least 2,000 or more adults in each country. These respondents were randomly selected citizens or residents of the country aged between 18 and 64 years. These countries were selected specifically due to their innovation-driven economies.

Table 3 Intent to start a business in the next 3 years

Rank	Country	Rate (%)	Rank	Country	Rate (%)
1	Taiwan	26.9	14	Austria	11.6
2	Singapore	21.4	15	United Kingdom	11.5
3	France	18.9	16	Belgium	10.7
4	United States	16.5	17	Greece	10.5
5	Portugal	16.2	18	Netherlands	10.1
6	Malaysia	15.7	19	Finland	9.4
7	Slovakia	15.6	20	Germany	8.9
8	Slovenia	14.7	21	Denmark	8.4
9	Korea	14.6	22	Switzerland	8.3
10	Israel	14.5	23	Ireland	8.0
11	Spain	12.1	24	Norway	6.7
12 =	Italy	11.8	25	Japan	5.4
12 =	Sweden	11.7			

Tourism Department Study Plan

The Tourism Department was the first institution in the Middle East to receive UNWTO TedQual certification for its undergraduate tourism program in May 2013. The UNWTO TedQual certification system is a quality assurance system for tourism education, training, and research.

At the time being, students registering in the Tourism undergraduate program study for four years (eight semesters). The department undergraduate academic plan is composed of 120 credit hours, see Table 4, including seven course categories as follows:

Table 4: Course Category 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 Language Courses and 2 Department Electives)	24
7	Specialization Requirements	36
Total		120

All students registering in the department should study the Major Requirements courses, see Table 5, which include 12 courses (34 credit hours) regardless of their specific specialization (Tourism Management & Hospitality Management). Students usually receive these courses during their first four semesters in the department.

Table 5: 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 6, which include 12 courses (36 credit hours) in one of the department specializations (Tourism Management & Hospitality Management) for four semesters.

Table 6: Specialization Requirements (36 Cr)

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

To complete their study plans, students choose two courses to study from the Department Electives courses list, see Table 7.

Table 7: Major Electives (6 Cr)

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

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was used to gather data and measure respondents' perceptions with regard to the subject under investigation. Questions were developed from the literature on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions, which provided the framework for the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of six sections; the first section was designed to obtain some general information of respondents. For sections 2 till 6 respondents were asked to rate their levels of agreement with the mentioned statements on a five-point Likert scale where 5 is Definitely agree and 1 is Definitely disagree. Entrepreneurial intentions were measured in the second section. The third section measured respondents' job preference, while respondents' perceptions of education effect on entrepreneurial intentions were measured in the fourth section. The fifth section measured entrepreneurship pull factors, and finally the sixth section measured entrepreneurship push factors.

The research tool was distributed on Tourism Department - College of Arts and Social Sciences - Sultan Qaboos University - Sultanate of Oman graduates 2013 in classrooms and at the researcher's office on week 12/16 of spring 2013 semester. Thirty eight questionnaires were distributed (total number of 2013 graduates), 36 were returned; the response rate was 95%.

Data were tested for normality of distribution then means and standard deviations were used for data description and ranking; thereafter analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test for significance between groups of respondents. The level of significance used was $P \leq 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondents' general information

The sample comprises 36 students out of 38 expected graduates (2013), representing the two major department specializations: Tourism Management and Hospitality Management, the majority were male students, see Table 8.

Table 8: Respondents' general information

Specialization * Gender			
	Male	Female	Total / %
Hospitality Management	16	5	21 (58.3%)
Tourism Management	6	9	15 (41.7%)
Total / %	22 (61.1%)	14 (38.9%)	36 (100%)

2. Respondents' Entrepreneurial Intentions

This part intended to gradually discover respondents' perception of entrepreneurship as an executable career goal. Three statements were used to assess entrepreneurial intention in general and the time plan set to execute such intention. Analysis of the respondents' answers reveals that for them entrepreneurship is a long term goal rather than a short or medium term goal, see Table 9.

As a career goal; the Hospitality Management specialization students mean score was higher than that of the Tourism Management specialization students'. But with regard to the other two points the mean scores were nearly the same, see Table 9.

Table 9: Respondents' Entrepreneurial Intentions (Specialization)

		My goal is to become an entrepreneur	I have thought seriously to start my own business after completing my study	I will start my business in the next five years
Hospitality Management	Mean	4.24	3.57	3.57
	S.D	0.70	1.36	1.12
	N	21.00	21.00	21.00
Tourism Management	Mean	3.93	3.60	3.53
	S.D	1.33	1.24	1.60
	N	15.00	15.00	15.00
Total	Mean	4.11	3.58	3.56
	S.D	1.01	1.30	1.32
	N	36.00	36.00	36.00

Note: 1= Definitely Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Definitely agree

In accordance with the literature the results analysis reveals that the concept of an entrepreneur is shown to be highly gendered, identifying oneself as an entrepreneur appears to have a stronger degree of importance for men (Humbert & Drew, 2010). The mean scores for the three statements used to assess entrepreneurial intention were higher with respect to males than to females, see Table 10.

Table 10: Respondents' Entrepreneurial Intentions (Gender)

		My goal is to become an entrepreneur	I have thought seriously to start my own business after completing my study	I will start my business in the next five years
Male	Mean	4.45	3.91	3.64
	S.D	0.67	1.15	1.36
	N	22.00	22.00	22.00
Female	Mean	3.57	3.07	3.43
	S.D	1.22	1.38	1.28
	N	14.00	14.00	14.00
Total	Mean	4.11	3.58	3.56
	S.D	1.01	1.30	1.32
	N	36.00	36.00	36.00

Note: 1= Definitely Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Definitely agree

3. Respondents' Job Preference

Results analysis of Respondents' Job Preference verified that 44% agreed that they prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a governmental office, with regard to whether they prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a company: 50% agreed, see Table 11. The findings accord with the literature in that graduates join the labor market in either government sector or private sector, few of them head towards entrepreneurship, although entrepreneurship offers significant opportunities for individuals to achieve financial independence and benefit the economy by contributing to job and career creation, innovation, and economic growth (Chernyshenko et al., 2013).

Table 11: General Respondents' Job Preference

I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a governmental office							
	Definitely agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Definitely Disagree	Not Applicable	Total
Frequency	9	7	13	4	2	1	36
%	25.0	19.4	36.1	11.1	5.6	2.8	100.0
I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a company							
	Definitely agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Definitely Disagree	Not Applicable	Total
Frequency	6	12	10	4	4	-	36
%	16.7	33.3	27.8	11.1	11.1	-	100.0

Further analysis indicated that the Hospitality Management specialization students mean score was higher than that of the Tourism Management specialization students'. Female students' preference of entrepreneurship is lower than that of male students', see Table 12.

Table 12: Respondents' Job Preference (Specialization-Gender)

		I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a governmental office	I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a company
Hospitality Management	Mean	3.62	3.57
	S.D	1.28	1.21
	N	21.00	21.00
Tourism Management	Mean	3.07	3.00
	S.D	1.28	1.20
	N	15.00	15.00
Male	Mean	3.59	3.55
	S.D	1.01	1.01
	N	22.00	22.00
Female	Mean	3.07	3.00
	S.D	1.64	1.47
	N	14.00	14.00
Total	Mean	3.39	3.33
	S.D	1.29	1.22
	N	36.00	36.00

Note: 1= Definitely Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Definitely agree

4. Respondents' Perception of Education Effect on Entrepreneurial Intentions

Seventy five percent of respondents agreed that education provided them with the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship, with a mean score of (3.89). They even stressed that education developed their entrepreneurial skills and abilities with 86% of the respondents and a mean score of (4.14), see Tables 13, 14. The results emphasize the ideas mentioned in the literature in that entrepreneurship education influences students' entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors (Noel, 2001; Varela and Gimenez, 2001; Fayolle & Gailly, 2004).

Table 13: General Respondents' perception of education effect on entrepreneurial intentions

My education provides the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship							
	Definitely agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Definitely Disagree	Not Applicable	Total
Frequency	13	14	5	1	2	1	36
%	36.1	38.9	13.9	2.8	5.6	2.8	100.0
My education develops my entrepreneurial skills and abilities							
	Definitely agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Definitely Disagree	Not Applicable	Total
Frequency	14	17	3	-	2	-	36
%	38.9	47.2	8.3	-	5.6	-	100.0

Table 14: Respondents' perception of education effect on entrepreneurial intentions (Mean Scores)

	Overall		Male		Female	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
My education provides the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship	3.89	1.26	4.09	0.97	3.57	1.60
My education develops my entrepreneurial skills and abilities	4.14	0.99	4.05	0.90	4.29	1.14

Note: 1= Definitely Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Definitely agree

5. Entrepreneurship PULL factors

Previous studies stated that people have various motivations for becoming entrepreneurs. These motivations are classified into two categories of push and pull factors (Kirkwood, 2009). Measuring respondents' perception of the pull factors indicated that the top three factors are, see Table 15:

- Earn a reasonable living.
- To use the skills learned during the study course.
- To provide job security.

While the least important pull factors are:

- Follow the example of someone that I admire.
- Entrepreneurial family culture.
- I enjoy taking risk.

For the Hospitality Management specialization students the top motivator was: *To provide job security*, while the motivator with the lowest rank was: *Entrepreneurial family culture*. For the Tourism Management specialization students' the top motivator was: *Earn a reasonable living*, while the motivator with the lowest rank was: *I enjoy taking risk*. Female students' rank put "*Earn a reasonable living*" as the number one motivator, while for males the top ranked motivator was: *To be my own boss*. The analysis of the female and male students' answers supports the facts already mentioned in previous studies in that although the level of female entrepreneurship appears to be on the rise in many countries, women entrepreneurs are still underrepresented compared to male entrepreneurs (Johansen, 2013).

Table 15: PULL Factors Ranking (Overall - Specialization - Gender)

	Overall		Hospitality Management		Tourism Management		Male		Female	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Earn a reasonable living	4.22	1	4.14	2	4.33	1	4.14	2	4.36	1=
To use the skills learned during the study course	4.11	2	4.10	3	4.13	2	4.05	3	4.21	3
To provide job security	4.03	3	4.24	1	3.73	4=	3.82	5	4.36	2=
To be my own boss	3.94	4	4.00	5	3.87	3	4.23	1	3.50	7
Opportunities in the market	3.89	5	4.05	4	3.67	6	3.95	4	3.79	5
Increase my prestige and status	3.75	6	3.76	6=	3.73	4=	3.68	7	3.86	4
To invest personal savings	3.44	7	3.76	6=	3.00	8	3.27	8	3.71	6
Follow the example of someone that I admire	3.36	8	3.52	8	3.13	7	3.73	6	2.79	10
Entrepreneurial family culture	3.03	9=	3.14	10	2.87	9	3.14	9	2.86	9
I enjoy taking risk	3.03	9=	3.24	9	2.73	10	2.91	10	3.21	8

Note: 1= Definitely Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Definitely agree

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed no gender or study specialization significant differences with regard to PULL factors, at a significance level of $P \leq 0.05$, see Table 16.

Table 16: PULL Factors - Gender / Study Specialization Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

PULL factors	Gender		Study specialization	
	Significance			
Follow the example of someone that I admire	0.07	n.s.	0.45	n.s.
To provide job security	0.09	n.s.	0.11	n.s.
To be my own boss	0.10	n.s.	0.76	n.s.
Earn a reasonable living	0.32	n.s.	0.38	n.s.
To invest personal savings.	0.33	n.s.	0.08	n.s.
I enjoy taking risk	0.49	n.s.	0.20	n.s.
Entrepreneurial family culture	0.52	n.s.	0.56	n.s.
To use the skills learned during the study course	0.54	n.s.	0.89	n.s.
Opportunities in the market	0.66	n.s.	0.31	n.s.
Increase my prestige and status	0.72	n.s.	0.95	n.s.

Note: s=significant, n.s.=not significant

6. Entrepreneurship PUSH factors

Measuring respondents' perception of the push factors indicated that the top three general factors are, see Table 17:

- Difficulty in obtaining bank finance.
- Lack of savings.
- Lack of business experience.

While the least important push factors were:

- Lack of business skills.
- Lack of support from family or friend.
- Lack of entrepreneurial education.

For the Hospitality Management specialization students the top push factor was: *Lack of savings*, while the factor with the lowest rank was: *Lack of entrepreneurial education*. For the Tourism Management specialization students' the top push factor was: *Difficulty in obtaining bank finance*, while the factor with the lowest rank was the same as that of the other specialization: *Lack of entrepreneurial education*. Female students' rank put "Difficulty in obtaining bank finance" as the number one push factor, while for males the top ranked push factor was: *Lack of savings*. The top ranked push factors for all groups were financially related.

Table 17: PUSH Factors Ranking (Overall - Specialization - Gender)

	Overall		Hospitality Management		Tourism Management		Male		Female	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Difficulty in obtaining bank finance	3.83	1	3.81	2	3.87	1	3.86	2	3.79	1
Lack of savings	3.81	2	3.86	1	3.73	2	3.91	1	3.64	2=
Lack of business experience	3.53	3	3.62	3	3.40	8	3.55	3	3.50	4=
Fear of business failure	3.36	4	3.24	4=	3.53	5=	3.36	4=	3.36	6
Difficult to find right partners	3.33	5=	3.14	7=	3.60	3=	3.14	8	3.64	2=
Lack of information about how to start a business	3.33	5=	3.14	7=	3.60	3=	3.23	7	3.50	4=
Lack of information about governmental funding sources	3.31	7	3.14	7=	3.53	5=	3.36	4=	3.21	7=
Lack of business skills	3.28	8	3.24	4=	3.33	9	3.32	6	3.21	7=
Lack of support from family or friend	2.89	9	3.24	4=	3.53	5=	2.86	10	2.93	9
Lack of entrepreneurial education	2.83	10	2.95	10	2.67	10	3.00	9	2.57	10

Note: 1= Definitely Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Definitely agree

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed no gender or study specialization significant differences with regard to PUSH factors, at a significance level of $P \leq 0.05$, see Table 18.

Table 18: PUSH Factors - Gender / Study Specialization Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

PUSH factors	Gender		Study specialization	
	Significance			
Difficult to find right partners	0.28	n.s.	0.32	n.s.
Lack of entrepreneurial education	0.34	n.s.	0.52	n.s.
Lack of savings	0.49	n.s.	0.75	n.s.
Lack of information about how to start a business	0.56	n.s.	0.32	n.s.
Lack of information about governmental funding sources	0.73	n.s.	0.36	n.s.
Lack of business skills	0.83	n.s.	0.84	n.s.
Difficulty in obtaining bank finance	0.84	n.s.	0.88	n.s.
Lack of support from family or friend	0.89	n.s.	0.94	n.s.
Lack of business experience	0.92	n.s.	0.62	n.s.
Fear of business failure	0.99	n.s.	0.53	n.s.

Note: s=significant, n.s.=not significant

PULL - PUSH Comparison and Analysis

Further analysis of the pull and push factors ranking indicates that respondents' education is one of the top motivators and when placed as a push factor took the bottom rank, see Table 19, this could be explained by reviewing the Tourism Department study plan, where there are 14 courses (12 Core Plus 2 Electives) that prepare the students both knowledge and skills wise for the business and entrepreneurship world, see Table 20.

Table 19: PULL VS. PUSH Factors

Pull Factors (Top Ranked)	Push Factors (Bottom Ranked)
Earn a reasonable living	Lack of business skills
To use the skills learned during the study course	Lack of support from family or friend
To provide job security	Lack of entrepreneurial education

Table 20: Tourism Department Study Plan Management and Entrepreneurship Related Courses

TOURISM MANAGEMENT	HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
SPECIALIZATION REQUIREMENTS COURSES	
Tourism Companies and Travel Agencies Operations	Hospitality Management
Airlines Operations and Management	Food Production
Economics of Tourism	Service in Hospitality
Event Management	Front Office Operations and management
Tourism Planning and Development	Housekeeping Operations and Management
IT Applications	
Human Resources Management for Tourism and Hospitality	
Statistics for Tourism and Hospitality	
Managerial Accounting	
Feasibility Study of Tourism and Hospitality Projects	
Graduation Project	
Marketing	
MAJOR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Cargo Operations	
Conventions and Meeting Services Management	
Cruise Operations and Management	
Training Management in Hospitality	
Club Operations and Management	
Risk Management for Tourism	
Service Quality Management for Tourism and Hospitality	
Resort Management	
Tourism Destination Marketing	
Entrepreneurship in tourism	

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study intended to assess the factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions among Tourism Department students - College of Arts and Social Sciences - Sultan Qaboos University - Sultanate of Oman. The findings have shown that:

Entrepreneurial intentions

- In general, entrepreneurship offers significant opportunities for individuals to achieve financial independence and benefit the economy by contributing to job and career creation.
- The respondents are considering and interested in entrepreneurship. There are pull and push factors that to varying degrees influence and shape their entrepreneurship intentions.
- For respondents, entrepreneurship is a long term goal rather than a short or medium term goal.
- Entrepreneurial intention was higher in male respondents than female respondents.
- By shifting the demand towards self-employment rather than government and private sectors; entrepreneurship would reduce current and future unemployment issues.

Job preference

- Respondents prefer to join the labor market in the government sector, then the private sector, and few of them head towards entrepreneurship.
- Female students' preference of entrepreneurship is lower than that of male students'.

Perception of education effect on entrepreneurial intentions

- Respondents reported that the Tourism Department study plan provided the necessary knowledge about entrepreneurship; moreover it developed their entrepreneurial skills and ability to identify business opportunities.

- The aim of entrepreneurship education is to provide graduates with the diverse range of skills required to pursue their career as an entrepreneur.
- The Tourism Department study plan comprises 14 courses that prepare the student both knowledge and skills wise for the business and entrepreneurship world.

Entrepreneurship pull factors

- The top three pull factors as mentioned by respondents were: To earn a reasonable living, to use the skills learned during the study course, and to provide job security.
- The least important pull factors were: To follow the example of a role model, entrepreneurial family culture, and risk enjoyment.

Entrepreneurship push factors

- The top three push factors as mentioned by respondents were: Difficulty in obtaining bank finance, lack of savings, and lack of business experience.
- The least important push factors were: Lack of business skills, lack of support from family or friend, and lack of entrepreneurial education.

Recommendations

Based on all the study parts and its aim and objectives the following recommendations were reached. These recommendations are intended to pave the way for further researches and studies relating to the investigated issue.

1. Entrepreneurship need to be learned, and be a part of the education system, in order to provide Omani youth with the motivations and skills required for entrepreneurship, instead of looking for a secure employment in the government sector.
2. Entrepreneurship culture should be promoted to the community through various media means and methods. Entrepreneurship awareness campaigns in schools, colleges could be a starting point.

3. Establish and set up information offices to provide the important information needed by new entrepreneurs; this will help overcome the fear of starting the new business and the lack of business experience.
4. As part of their corporate social responsibility, private sector business institutions could provide Consultation Offices that would help young entrepreneurs start on the right track and minimize risk perception.
5. Entrepreneurship should be supported through friendly business regulations, and simple financial support and banking procedures.

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