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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# SUSTAINING STUDENT'S INTEREST IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESS: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON CAMPUS JOB FAIRS: INTERNATIONAL T&H COLLEGE AT MADINA

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### ABSTRACT

In today's tourism and hospitality business, training and developing tourism students' for management role has been the focus of many institutions of higher learning. With explosion and competitive related course for the past several decades, the importance of tourism and hospitality landscape cannot be overemphasized. The purpose of this research is to explore the assessment of student's perspective on recent campus job fair and its effectiveness. The data on this qualitative study was based on the information gathered from the five participants who took part in the study.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism in today's hospitality landscape presents a lot of interesting and meaningful phenomena to travel public especially in the gulf region. Introducing young and upcoming general into the industry may come with its challenges. With the recent campus job fair organized at the International Tourism and Hospitality College at Medina to assess student's interest level and to evaluate their sustainability in the gulf area. The American Heritage Dictionary defined tourism as the One who travel for pleasure (The *American Heritage Dictionary*). Sustainability on the other hand is defined by (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2012: 9); "Sustainability is providing the daily needs without damaging the needs of future generations. It is defining the business models and life standards that will enable the future generations to survive, without depleting the expected possessions." This qualitative article armed at exploring the assessment of student's perspective on recent campus job fair and its effectiveness. With respect to its sustainability in measuring student's leadership and competency in the industry.

The study design was suitable for meeting the research objectives and answering the research questions, as adequate knowledge and insight into the subject of the study is presently lacking (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). This qualitative study approach was chosen for the purpose of gaining understanding on the subject matter being discussed (Sitkin and Brown, 2013).

### Literature Review

Several definition have been proposed by several scholars and researcher with respect to tourism and its sustainability especially among the youth. The American Heritage Dictionary defined tourism as the One who travel for pleasure (The *American Heritage Dictionary*). Furthermore, just as several meaning have been proposed for tourism, so as sustainability have had several meaning in terms of its definitions. The most notable definition of sustainability is the application and consumption of natural given ownership, this means that those natural possession should not only be consumed for just today's use but for tomorrow's use (Marriott, 2016; Lu and Nepal, 2009; Collier, 2008; Redclift, 2001; Weale and Williams, 1992). The world trade organization (WTO, 1998:21) further explained the definition of tourism sustainability as living up to the expectations of

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tourists and host region while protecting and increasing opportunities for the future. This according to world trade organization (WTO) indicated that it will go a long way to enhance economic, and social needs of the inhabitants or the people. The importance of developing this young manpower to feed tourism industries and to sustain them has evolved and preceded over the last few years in the Gulf region most especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Academia and Corporate managers in the region are becoming well aware of the need to expand tourism and hospitality business to the young and upcoming individual in the region. In addition to providing this training, they also are concerned with their sustainability since it has a virgin tourism industry in the region. A very good number of organizations have realized the importance of this tourist and sustaining the workforce and emphasized the socio-economic and environmental goals in their respective companies (Hilton, 2016; International Hotel Chain, 2016; Lawler and Worley, 2012; GRI, 2011; Bansal, 2005).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This explorative qualitative research allowed the researcher(s) to conduct an in-depth semi-structured interview to assess student's perspective on recent campus job fair and its effectiveness at the International Tourism and Hospitality College at Medina. The purpose for the semi-structured interview was informed by the need to enquire specific questions as well as provoke the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon of interest, which could only be achieved through more probing questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the interview process, number of observations was made regarding the students' responses. Mainly this observation was due to cultural and behavioral side of various participants. For instance, some of the students were very reserved to voice out their opinion simply because of the cultural perspectives. Most of the participants were either by virtue of their training/upbringing or there were not just forthcoming with details of the questionnaire posed to them. But overall, they felt very satisfied with the conduct of the interview.

### Students' responses

**How helpful the job fair's resources were?:** 75% of the students were of the view that the job fair's resources were very helpful. 25% of the students considered that the job fair's resources were not helpful and the remaining 25% of the students did not know whether or not the job fair's resources were helpful.

**Whether participating organizations at the fair contacted, interviewed or hired some students:** Twenty-five percent of the students were contacted by participating organizations. Fifty percent of the students indicated that they were interviewed by participating organizations. None of the students were hired and 25% were neither contacted nor interviewed.

**Date and time of the job fair:** Fifty percent of the students indicated that they were convenient with the date and time of the job fair. 12.5% were very convenient with the time and

date and 37.5% were indifferent of the date and time of the job fair.

**Students' motivation for participating in the job fair:** Students had different motivations for participating in the job fair. 62.5% of the students' motivation was to find out about employment opportunities and 25% of the students' motivation was networking with other professionals. None of the students were motivated by the possibility to gain exposure; however, 12.5% of the students indicated that their motivation was to find out about employment opportunities, networking with other professionals and to gain exposure.

**How students heard of the job fair:** Students got to hear of the job fair via several channels. Majority of the students; 37.5% heard of the job fair through the institutional website. 25% of students heard by email and 25% heard via word of mouth. 12.5% of the students heard via three channels; the institution's website, email and phone.

**Part of the job fair students enjoyed the most:** The students had different experiences from the job fair. Whereas 25% of the students claimed they did not enjoy the job fair, 50% enjoyed the job fair because of the companies that represented, their presentations they made and the choices they offered. 12.5% of the students enjoyed the interview they got with some companies and 12.5% enjoyed the offers they got from some companies.

**Suggestions for future job fairs:** Majority of the students, 50% were of the view that, more companies should be involved in future job fairs. 12.5% indicated that the date should be rescheduled to the last month and 37.5% had no suggestions.

**Students' satisfaction and recommendation:** When students were asked whether they were satisfied with the job fair and if they would recommend to their family and friends, their responses were as follows:

Majority, representing 50% indicated that they were very satisfied and will recommend the International Tourism and Hospitality College at Madinah to their friends and family. 37.5% of the students were satisfied and may recommend International T & H College at Madinah to their friends and family and 12.5% were not satisfied.

**Organizations responses:** 100% of the representatives who answered the questionnaires were the first contacts to their organizations. 100% of the organizations indicated that there was excellent communication and registration prior to the job fair. 100% of the organizations were of the view that the time and location of the job fair was excellent. 100% of the organizations indicated that the overall organization of the event was excellent. According to the survey, 100% of the organizations indicated that the table arrangement met their expectation. The survey showed that 100% of the organizations had their expectations met with respect to the quality of resumes received and they perceived the students' ability to communicate as excellent. However, 50% of the organizations were of the view that the appearance of the students' dress was excellent whereas 50% perceived that the students' appearance met their expectation. Finally, 100% of the organizations had an excellent overall impression of the event.

## Conclusion

In spite of the few glitches and hitches during the interview process, the participants were very much satisfied with the conduct of the fair. Almost all of them recommended that this fairs should either be annual affairs or even every semester. They indicated that, this form of awareness create and exposes students business landscape and to better prepare them for outside world. Indeed, this assertion was far from being wrong. Another observations made during this concluding part of this interview were the participating organizations who on their part insisted that the organization of such job fairs increase their chances of getting the best workforce in the market especially in the hotels and other hospitality areas of tourism. The organizational participants maintained that the sustainability of some of the people they usual hire from outside are always bigger of a problem. They encountered high turnovers costing them a lot of money. They recommended that the colleges and academics or trainers of this institutions need to do more during the training processes to get them to understand the cost of recruiting employees for an organization. They indicated that the turnover in the industry is so high and think this kind of job fairs will help them get better fits for the various positions especially in the hotels.

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