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Investigating The Needs And Perceptions Of The Omani Staff In Tourism And Hospitality Agencies Regarding The Development Of A Software Course For Enhancing Their Entrepreneurial Competencies

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is considered an important approach in education that plays a vital role in boosting the social and economic developments of society across all sectors and societies. The quantitative approach has been selected for determining the strategy and methods of sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The data were collected by employing the method of the questionnaire survey from one around 100 participants who were randomly chosen from three agencies in the sector of tourism and hospitality in Oman. The survey utilized the Likert scale with ten statements organized in one section. The second section in the survey included several open-ended questions that were designed for collecting in depth data. Analysis of the collected data revealed that the majority of the participants were in favour of the development of the software course. The results of the study will be useful for tourism entrepreneurs, training institutions, and instructional designers in the tourism sector. The result will provide information to both public and private agencies in designing the most effective training course for entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, enterpreneural competencies, course design, a software course.

1. Introduction

In this era of global work and technological innovations, teaching and training have witnessed considerable transformations across all societies. Recognizing the role of teaching and training in national development has pushed policymakers, stakeholders, and curriculum developers to take advantage of the latest approaches across all fields. Among these latest approaches is the one of entrepreneurship. Within the domain of education, entrepreneurship has recently emerged as a core economic and development force to equip individuals with the youth with practical knowledge and skills that qualify them for the workplace environment. Recently, entrepreneurial education has become an essential aspect of both industrial and educational policy across many countries (Hytti and O'Gorman,

2004). It has emerged as a response to the increasingly globalized and demanding world we live in, influencing all people and organizations in a society to be equipped with entrepreneurial competencies (Gibb, 2002).

The Omani government has taken into consideration the crucial importance of entrepreneurship across all fields. Accordingly, it took serious steps through the Oman National Policy to foster the entrepreneurial sector across the nation. In the field of tourism, Oman has made a lot of efforts to encourage entrepreneurship through encouraging foreign tourists to travel to the country (Alani et al., 2017). Based on Oman tourism strategy in 2013, around thousands of jobs were generated in the field of tourism and hospitality (Pandow and Omar in Al Badi and Khan, 2020, p.48). Moreover, Oman Tourism Strategy aligns with the 2040 vision of Oman which declares that Oman will give considerable attention to the sector of tourism. Fir this, the Sultanate of Oman aims to generate about 535,000 jobs in Tourism Sector by 2040 (Oman Tourism Strategy, 2016).

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said emphasized the vision of Oman towards the development of the tourism industry to offer career opportunities to Omanis. He pointed out that "On this basis, we should prepare a new strategy to develop this sector so it can stand on its own feet in a severely competitive, flexible, and diversified international market." (Speech of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - 29th National Day).

- The Vision statement was "To develop tourism as an important and sustainable socio-economic sector of the Sultanate in a manner that reflects the Sultanate's historical, cultural and environmental heritage and sense of traditional hospitality and values ", and
- the Mission statement was "To help facilitate economic diversification, preservation of cultural integrity and environmental protection of The Sultanate "(Speech of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said - 29th National Day).

Nevertheless, it is a well known fact that building a successful investment in the tourism and hospitality industry is a demanding process determined by several crucial factors. Doubtless to say that developing training centers for employees and professionals working in the tourism sector is among the crucial factors.

Tourism and hospitality programs in Oman colleges and institutes offer entrepreneurial courses and programs to students as well as tourism employees. These programs are supposed to equip students with specific job, knowledge and technical skills for tourism and hospitality, such as human resources, tour operation, and marketing skills. However, the issue is to what extent these programs offer the entrepreneurial courses according to the requirements of globalization and technology innovations that are specifically required for this industry. The seriousness of this issue has motivated the researcher of this paper to carry on a research study to investigate the views of a population representing tourism staff and employees regarding the idea of designing a software course for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies.

The aim of this paper is to understand the views of staff and employees in Oman tourism agencies towards the idea of designing a training software course aiming at fostering entrepreneurial attitudes and skills.

More specifically, the study aims to:

1. explore the views of the Omani staff in tourism and hospitality agencies towards the development of a training software course for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies;
2. identify the specific needs of the Omani staff in tourism and hospitality agencies regarding the development of a training software course for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies.

This study is based on two research questions:

1. What are the views and perceptions of the Omani staff in tourism and hospitality agencies towards the development of a training software course for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies?

2. What are the specific needs of the Omani staff in tourism and hospitality agencies regarding the development of a training software course for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurship: An Overview with Definitions

Reviewing the existing literature, it has been found out that there was no common definition of the term entrepreneurship because it has been viewed from different perspectives of entrepreneurship schools of thought. From a restricted perspective, entrepreneurship is viewed as an important step for business development, self-employment, and venture to take new actions (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008, Mahieu, 2006). From a wide perspective, however, entrepreneurship is associated with personal traits such as professional development, creativity, personal development, creativity, independence, taking the initiative, and action orientation that qualify an individual to become an entrepreneur (Mwasalwiba, 2010).

Within the domain of education, there have been various terms used in relation to the main concept of entrepreneurship, such as entrepreneurship education, enterprise education, entrepreneurial education, and others (Hynes, 1996; Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994a, b.). The literature shows that it is crucial to shed light on these terms not only to understand the conceptual differences among them but also to understand the pedagogical differences among them. Understanding the pedagogical differences will, no doubt, help the researchers, stakeholders, curriculum developers, and instructional designers to understand and explore the rules and techniques of the new innovative approach of entrepreneurship (Lackéus, 2015; Mwasalwiba, 2010).

The term entrepreneurship education is considered a process that encompasses a combination of steps to sustain abilities such as knowledge, attitude, skills, and competencies. Based on this potential, entrepreneurship education aims to prepare graduates who will hold entrepreneurial traits in the future such as critical thinking, problem solving, independence, creativity, risk taking, and the like.

It is worth mentioning that the term entrepreneurship education represents a paradigmatic change in education due to its focus on pedagogic features that are so important such as problem-solving, authenticity, collaboration, engagement, teamwork, motivation, and the like. This makes it an outstanding approach that competes with other existing approaches in pedagogy, such as the task-based approach, problem-solving approach, and the service approach (Johannisson et al., 2013, Lackéus, 2013).

The term entrepreneur, on the other hand, refers to an individual who has essential characteristics and skills such as creativity, innovation, and risk-taking that enable him or her to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

2.2 Entrepreneurial competencies

The concept of competency has become a basic element in the field of education and has become a focus of study by many researchers (e.g., Ferreras-Garcia, 2021; Berdrow, 20 and Evers, 2011; Brockmann et al., 2008; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2011; Nab et al., 2010; Lans et al., 2011). Competency is an inclusive term as it integrates many personal traits such as personality, behavior, knowledge, skills, attitudes, within a workplace environment (Ferreras-Garcia, 2021; Mulder, 2012). Gonzalez and Wagenaar (2006) define competency as a comprehensive term that integrates a "combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, and ethical values" (p. 255). Therefore, the authors recommend including competencies in all course units and assessment criteria.

The literature review on entrepreneurial competencies shows an important classification or categorization of competencies in terms of generic vs. specific competencies (Ferreras-Garcia, 2021, p. 723). The term "generic competencies" refers to traits that are interdisciplinary in the sense that they are not related to a specific major.

Accordingly, students should acquire these competencies regardless of the course or program they take. In this regard, Villa and Poblete (2007) describe generic competencies as below:

1. Instrumental competencies- They are viewed as a combination of manual and cognitive skills that are important for enhancing professional competences. The importance of these skills lies in helping individuals to enhance their understanding abilities, managing ides, language skills, and academic performance.

2. Interpersonal Competencies-They include more personal skills that enable the individual to act gently and nicely with others at social dimensions. The focus of these skills is on emotions, feelings, and other asocial skills that maintain social and cooperation with others.

3. Systematic Competencies-They refer to the importance of having instrumental as well as interpersonal skills that enable a person to have a broad vision of the world. They also refer to the ability of an individual to keep himself/herself more updated with the global changes and improvements across all dimensions in life

Entrepreneurial education aims to develop some level of entrepreneurial competencies for all trainees and learners to become creative and skillful in whatever they undertake. This view agrees with much of the literature on the general interpretations of competencies as well as on entrepreneurial competencies (See, for example, Sánchez, 2011; Fisher et al., 2008).

Lackeus (2015) provides a definition of entrepreneurial competencies that is similar to the ones mentioned earlier when he points out that the "entrepreneurial competencies" is a combination of interpersonal and professional traits such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes that positively impact the individual's ability perform professionally and successfully in the workplace.

Lackeus (2015) provides a comprehensive description of the term entrepreneurial competencies that is useful for curriculum and course designers highlighting the types of cognitive and non-cognitive competencies that must be taken into account by curriculum developers and instructional designers. Lackeus, as well as other researchers (such as Hursh, 2007, Amrein and Berliner, 2002), highlight the importance of the interaction between entrepreneurship education and influential factors. Some researchers (such as Farrington et al., 2012, Morrison and Schoon, 2013, Levin, 2013) acknowledged the risk of neglect of non-cognitive competencies. They considered it as a serious issue that may impact academic performance and future labor market outcomes. Farrington et al. (2012) classified several non-cognitive factors that are supposed to influence academic performance. See figure 2 below:

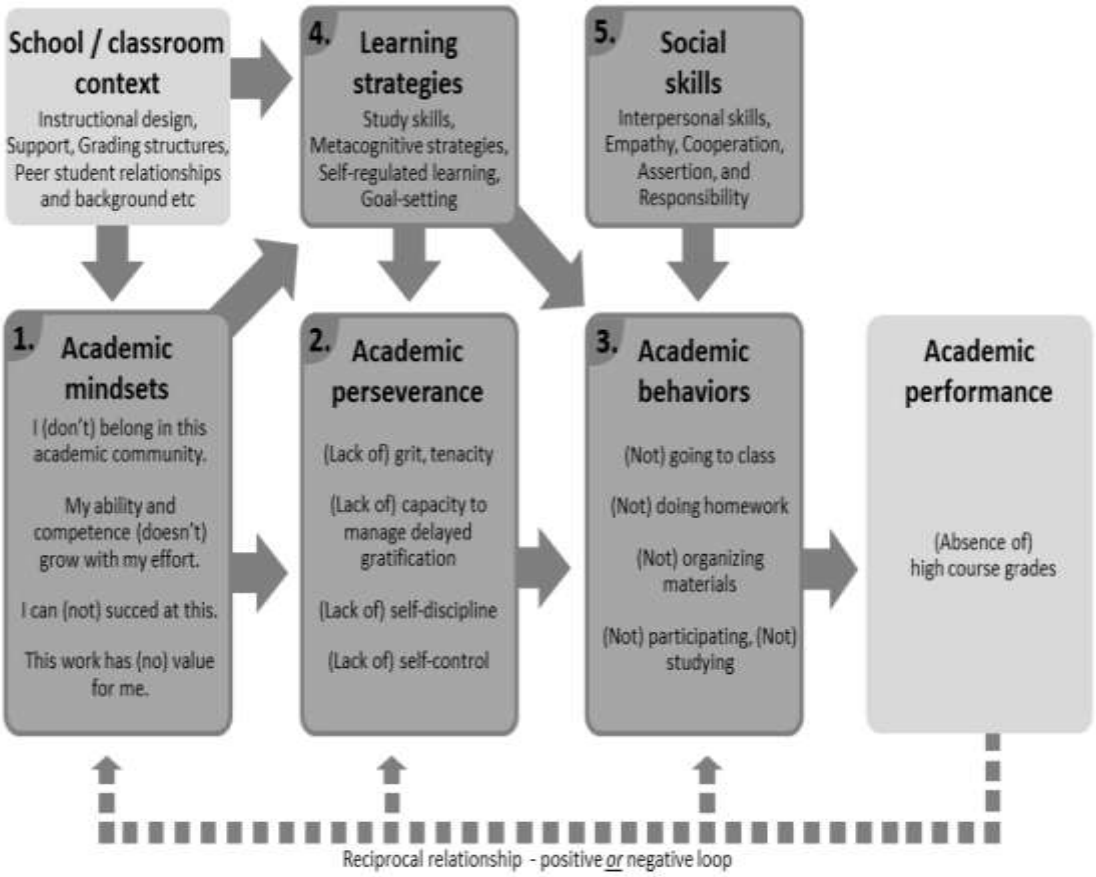


Figure 1. Non-cognitive factors (Adapted from Farrington et al., 2012)

For this, Lackeus (2015) provided a comprehensive framework outlining some key entrepreneurial competencies and their relation to cognitive and non-cognitive competencies as in Table 1 below.

Table 1. A Framework of Entrepreneurial Competencies (Adapted from Lackeus, 2014)

	Main theme	Sub themes	Primary source	Interpretation used in this report
Cognitive competencies	Knowledge	**Mental models**	(Kraiger et al., 1993)	Knowledge about how to get things done witho resources, Risk and probability models.
		Declarative knowledge	(Kraiger et al., 1993)	Basics of entrepreneurship, value creation, id generation, opportunities, accounting, finan technology, marketing, risk, etc.
		Self-insight	(Kraiger et al., 1993)	Knowledge of personal fit with being an entrepreneu being entrepreneurial.
	Skills	**Marketing skills**	(Fisher et al., 2008)	Conducting market research, Assessing the marketpla Marketing products and services, Persuasion, Getti people excited about your ideas, Dealing with custome Communicating a vision.
		Resource skills	(Fisher et al., 2008)	Creating a business plan, Creating a financial pl Obtaining financing, Securing access to resources
		Opportunity skills	(Fisher et al., 2008)	Recognizing and acting on business opportunities a other kinds of opportunities, Product / service / conc development skills
		Interpersonal skills	(Fisher et al., 2008)	Leadership, Motivating others, Managing peop Listening, Resolving conflict, Socializing
		Learning skills	(Fisher et al., 2008)	Active learning, Adapting to new situations, coping w uncertainty
		Strategic skills	(Fisher et al., 2008)	Setting priorities (goal setting) and focusing on goa Defining a vision, Developing a strategy, Identifyi strategic partners
Non-cognitive competencies	Attitudes	**Entrepreneurial passion**	(Fisher et al., 2008)	"I want". Need for achievement.
		Self-efficacy	(Fisher et al., 2008)	"I can". Belief in one's ability to perform certain tas successfully.
		Entrepreneurial identity	(Krueger, 2005, Krueger, 2007)	"I am / I value". Deep beliefs, Role identity, Values.
		Proactiveness	(Sánchez, 2011, Murnieks, 2007)	"I do". Action-oriented, Initiator, Proactive.
		Uncertainty / ambiguity tolerance	(Sánchez, 2011, Murnieks, 2007)	"I dare". Comfortable with uncertainty and ambigui Adaptable, Open to surprises.
		Innovativeness	(Krueger, 2005, Murnieks, 2007)	"I create". Novel thoughts / actions, Unpredictab Radical change, Innovative, Visionary, Creative, Ri breaker.
		Perseverance	(Markman et al., 2005, Cotton, 1991)	"I overcome". Ability to overcome adverse circumstanc

In light of the discussion above, Lackeus views entrepreneurship as a promising area that contributes to "the improvement of general education through its innate capacity to foster the development of non-cognitive competencies leading to increased academic performance" (p.12).

In spite of its importance in the field of entrepreneurship, the relationship between the concept of entrepreneurial competency and teaching hasn't been widely considered (Lans et al., 2008; Sanchez, 2011). Researchers and experts in this field (such as Lens, 2008; Salzmann, 2010; Ferreras Garcia et al., 2019; Nowinski et al., 2019; Sanchez, 2011; Tounes et al., 2014) have pointed out that teaching competencies are fundamentally important because it provides students with the basic aspects of workplace skills and knowledge.

2.3 Entrepreneurship in Tourism

Tourism, all over the world, has proven to be one of the important sectors that contribute to the growth of the country's economy, employability, and the welfare of the community (Lorio and Corsale, 2010; Liu et al., 2018). The World Travel and Tourism Council Survey (2019) points out that travel and tourism are among the largest industrial sectors in the world that generate new jobs and business opportunities across many countries. "According to the UNWTO's long-term forecast report Tourism Towards 2030, it is expected that international tourist arrivals worldwide will increase by 3.3% a year between 2010 and 2030, to eventually reach 1.8 billion by 2030 (UNWTO, 2011 as cited in Danial et al., 2017, p.1).

The Sultanate of Oman, the context of the entire study, has a mixed economy system in both state and private sectors, and as such, the enterprises co-exist. However, "entrepreneurship in Oman is hardly new" (Sokhalingam et al., 2013, p. 54). Over the recent years, Oman has made a lot of efforts to encourage entrepreneurship in the field of tourism and has increasingly encouraged foreign tourists to travel to the country (Alani et al. , 2017).

In the tourism sector, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in promoting the tourism business within the country. The Omani government, as has been previously stated, has acknowledged the crucial importance of entrepreneurship, and accordingly, it has managed in the last few years to take serious steps and actions to support the entrepreneurial sector across the nation. As an initial step, the Omani national policy has employed various tools to facilitate the promotion, funding, tax incentives, and provision of technical support to launch and manage small businesses. Such actions have entailed new legislation the establishment of public as well as private sector service providers to support the entrepreneurial projects (Sokhalingam et al., 2013).

Doubtless to say that the promotion and sustainability of tourism entrepreneurship have impacts on education and curriculum development in tourism academics and programs. Among these impacts is a considerable increase in the number of educational programs offered by schools and higher education institutions in this field (Airey, 2005; Walmsley, 2012). The important impact is the new modifications in the curriculum development (Dredge et al., 2015).

3. Research Design

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of Omani staff in the tourism and hospitality sectors towards the development of software for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies and skills. It also aims to identify their needs when developing training software. Based on the research objectives, the entire study stands on the philology of both the positivism and interpretivism paradigms. This is due to the intention of the researcher who endeavors to collect the data objectively within the criteria of trustworthiness, reliability, and credibility (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, the study is shaped and guided by methods and tools of the quantitative as well as the qualitative approaches for collecting and analyzing the data.

3.1 Methods of Data Collection

In this study, a self-prepared questionnaire was used by the researcher to investigate the tourism staff's perceptions and specific needs when developing training software for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies.

The Survey was selected as the most appropriate method since the goal of the research is to collect original data from a large number of respondents. Furthermore, the survey was selected to explore the participants' views, attitudes, and experiences and what they know about the topic under investigation (Dorney, 2011, Creswell, 2013).

The Questionnaire survey in this study consisted of two sections in line with the two research questions and objectives. Section One consisted of a set of ten items set up to find out the respondents' perceptions regarding the importance and effects of the software. In line with Question One, this section measured the respondents' agreement/disagreement levels based on a five-point Likert scale. The respondents' agreement and disagreement related to various issues

regarding the role and effects of the developed software See Appendix 1). The measurement for the items was adopted from prior research and modified to suit the research context, questions, and goals.

The second section of the Survey draws on the theory of needs analysis by Hutchinson and Waters (1991) as it aims to collect data based on the respondents' needs. It also draws on Miles and Huberman's Qualitative Approach. Section Two is composed of eight open-ended questions designed to collect more information from the participants (see Appendix 2).

The questionnaire survey was designed by the App of Google Form as a web-based survey tool. Online surveys are usually created as Web forms with a database to store the answers and statistical software to provide analytics. The survey link was disseminated through email to all participants.

3.3 Sample of the Study

The sample of the study represented the targeted population that fit the context and agenda of the study without bias in the selection process. The participants were a mix of staff, employees, and professionals working in different agencies in the tourism and hospitality sectors in Oman. They were randomly selected as a sample population for the present study. The sample has been involved in this study due to their experiences in entrepreneurship in tourism with no limit for their level of education, degrees, and age. Thus, investigating the perceptions of the respondents can reveal significant insights into the effectiveness of the experience (Creswell, 2013; Dorney, 2011).

3.4 Instruments of the Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis in this research is to answer the two research questions. Based on the type of research questions, the data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Accordingly, two methods of data analysis were used.

According to Question One, the data were generated quantitatively using Google Forms as a Web-based management tool. Once the web questionnaire was filled online, the data were automatically recorded in a Google spreadsheet in an analyzable format with pie charts as graphical representations of data. The analysis showed a summary of responses which appeared in the form of pie charts with all demographics presented as percentages for each questionnaire item.

With regard to the set of open-ended questions in the second survey section, the qualitative method was used. For this purpose, the models of Miles and Huberman (1994), Miles et al. (2013), and Creswell's model (2013) were utilized. Following these models, particularly the one by Miles and Huberman (1994), the responses collected from the second section passed through three stages: "data reduction," "data display," and "conclusion drawing/verification." With regard to the second stage (data display), the study used figures and tables, as shown in Chapter Four, to display all emerging findings. According to the third stage (conclusions), the study presented all findings, along with the conclusions.

4. Research Findings

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings that emerged from the data analysis. To present the data sensibly and coherently, the findings are presented in two categories according to the two research questions that guided this study. Therefore, this chapter includes two sections. The first section presents the obtained findings in response to Question One of this study, while the second section presents the findings in response to Question two.

4.1 Section One Findings

This section outlines ten questionnaire items that provided answers to the first research question below. The data analysis generally showed that the respondents were in favor of the idea of developing a software course to be used as an asynchronous mode of learning. Table 2 below provides a summary of the general percentages of the responses to Section One items. For the purpose of clarification and illustration, a figure with graphic data and a table with frequencies and percentages are attached. Below each table, a brief description of abbreviations is used, such as "Abbreviations: SA, strongly disagree; A, agree; UD, undecided; DA, disagree; SD, strongly disagree; F, frequency."

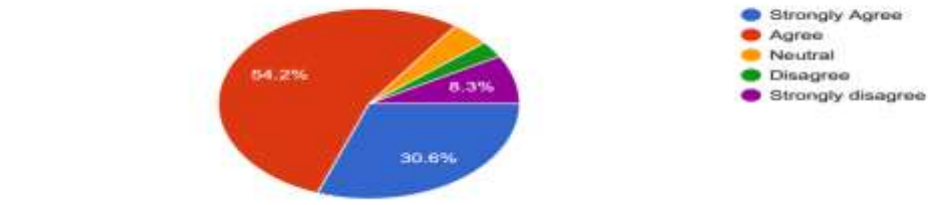
O.1 What are the perceptions of the Omani staff in Tourism and Hospitality agencies towards the development of Software for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies?

Table 2. Effects of the Proposed Software on Enhancing Entrepreneur Competencies

	Effects of the Software	**% Frequency of participant**				
		SA	A	N	DA	SD
1	Developing a digital training software helps me get useful knowledge of entrepreneurship.	30.6	54.2	3	2	8.3
2	Developing a digital training software is important for improving my entrepreneurial skills, techniques, and required in the business atmosphere and the workplace.	38.9	45.8			
3	The software helps me improve my technical skills (written and oral communication, technical management and organizing skills);	22.2	45.2	3	3	2
4	The software helps me improve my business management skills (planning, decision-making, marketing and accounting skills); and	26.4	46.6			
5	The software helps me improve my personal entrepreneurial skills (marketing, innovation, risk taking, persistence and being change-oriented).	81.1	48.6	23.6	3	5
6	The software helps me improve my understanding of concepts in the field of business	44.4	30.6	16.7	4	4
7	The software keeps me updated with the global skills and trends in the field of tourism.	41.7	26.4	20.8	1	8.3
8	The software increases my motivation to learn entrepreneur skills for the workplace.	18.1	37.5	27.8	5	8.1
9	The software increases my skills of communication with the foreign coworkers as well as customers or visitors in Oman tourism sites.	48.6	27.8	12.5	5	2
10	The software helps me to cope with the challenges and barriers to successful entrepreneurship in the field of tourism.	54.2	22.2	12.5	5	2

Item 1: Developing a digital training software helps me gain useful knowledge of entrepreneurship

Item (1) in the questionnaire survey aims to explore the respondents' views on the effects of the developed software in enhancing their entrepreneurship knowledge. Figure 2 below reveals that (54.7%) of the respondents reported their agreement that the software helps them get useful knowledge of entrepreneurship, and (30%) of the respondents reported their strong agreement. In contrast, a few participants (8%) strongly disagreed with the software's positive effects, and only (2%) of the students disagreed. Those who were neutral were very few around (3%).



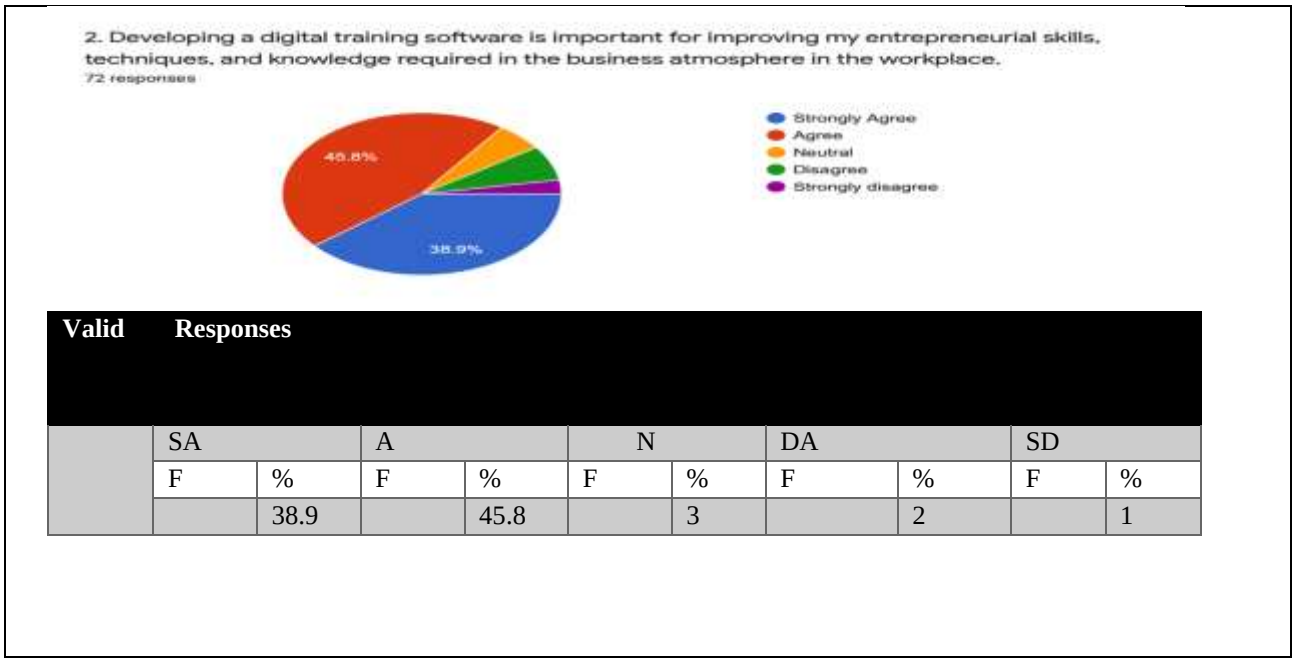
Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		30.6		54.2		3		2		8.3

SA, strongly disagree; A, agree; UD, undecided; DA, disagree; SD, strongly disagree; F, frequency

Figure 2. Effects of the Software on Acquiring Knowledge of Entrepreneurship

Item 2: Developing a digital training software is important for improving my entrepreneurial skills, techniques, and competencies required in the business atmosphere and the workplace.

Figure 3 reveals that (45%) and (38%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that software is important for improving the entrepreneurial skills, techniques, and competencies that are required in the business atmosphere and the workplace. In comparison, only (5%) of the participants disagreed, and (1%) of them reflected their strong disagreement. Around (3%) of the respondents remained neutral.

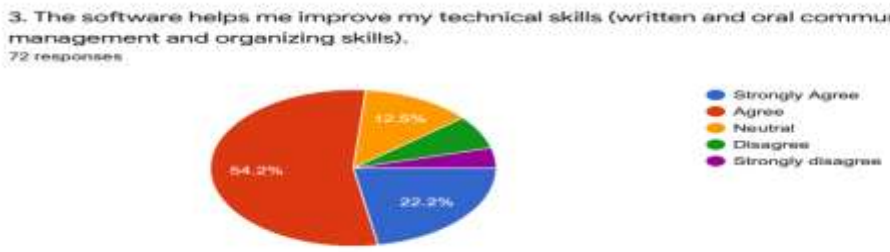


Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		38.9		45.8		3		2		1

Figure 3. Effects of the Software on Improving Entrepreneurship Skills in the Workplace

Item 3: Importance of the Software in Improving Staff's Technical Skills

As shown in Figure 4 about two-thirds of the respondents think that the software helps improve their technical skills, including written and oral communication skills, technical management, and organizing skills. Thus, about (54%) agreed and (22%) strongly agreed on the importance of the developed software in this aspect. However, a small proportion of the respondents (3%) chose the strongly disagree option, and (2%) chose the disagree option. Around (12%) of the responses revealed neutral responses.

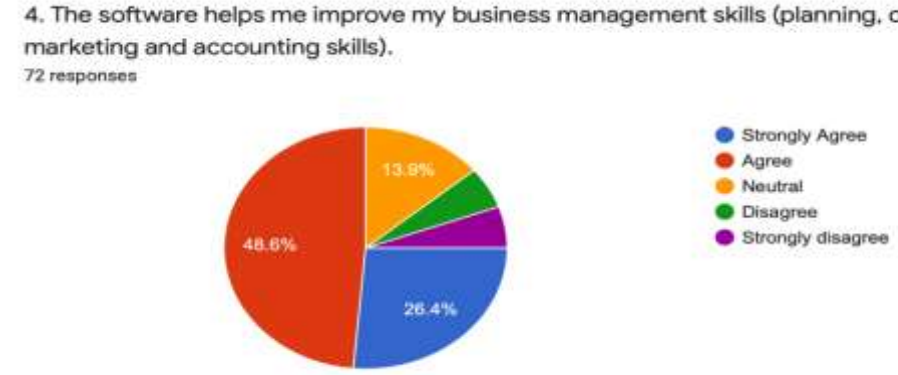


Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		22.2		45.2		12.5		3		2

Figure 4. Importance of the Software in Improving Staff's Technical Skills

Item 4: Effects of the Software on Tourism Staff's Management Skills

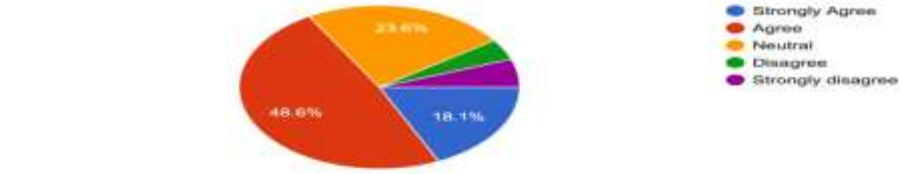
Figure 5 significantly illustrates the participants' agreement (48%) and strong agreement (26%) on the positive effects of the software in improving the staff's management skills such as planning, marketing, decision making, and accounting skills. On the other hand, only (5%) and (4%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, while Less than one-third (13%) were neutral.



Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		26.4		48.6		13.9		5		5

Figure 5. Effects of the Software on Improving Staff's Business Management Skills
Item 5: Effects of the Software on the Tourism Staffs' Personal Skills

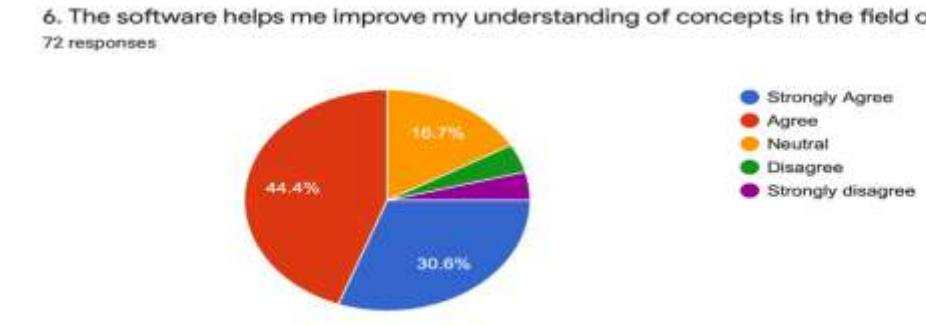
Figure 6 shows that more than half of the participants reported their agreement (48%) and strong agreement (18 %) on the role played by the developed software in improving their entrepreneurial skills such as marketing, creativity, risk-taking, persistence, and self-development. However, only a few participants about (5%) disagreed with the important role played by the software. The remaining third of the participants (23%) were neutral.



Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		81.1		48.6		23.6		3		5

Figure 6. Effects of the Software on the Tourism Staffs' Personal Skills
Item 6: Effects of the Software on Understanding Concepts in Business

Figure 7 illustrates that more than two-thirds of the participants (44%) and (30%) reported their agreement and strong agreement, respectively, on the significant role of the developed software in enhancing understanding of the concepts related to the entrepreneurship field. Only a few participants, about (5%) and (4%), revealed their disagreement and strong disagreement, respectively, on the significant role of the software. A few participants about (13%) were neutral.



Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		44.4		30.6		16.7		4		4

Figure 7. Effects of the Software on Understanding Concepts in Business

Item 7: The Software Keeps the Tourism Staff More Updated with the Global Skills

Figure 8 is not that much different from the above figures in showing the high percentages of agreement and strong agreement responses. More than one-third of the respondents around (41%) showed their agreement, and around (26%) showed strong agreement that the developed software helps keep the staff more updated with the global skills. However, around (20%) of the participants remained neutral while very few of them about (8%) strongly disagreed and (1%) disagreed on the important role of the developed software course.

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		41.7		26.4		20.8		1		8.3

Figure 8.The Software Keeps the Tourism Staff More Updated with the Global Skills

Item 8: Effects of the Software on Motivation

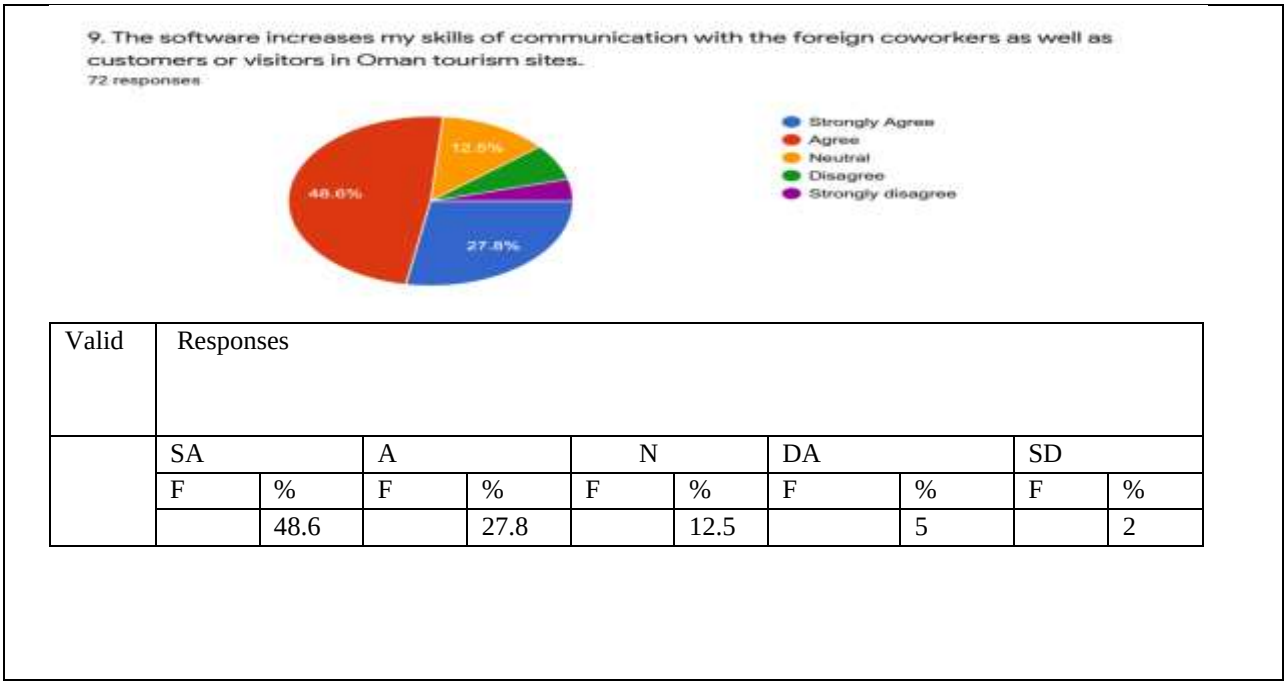
According to Figure 9, almost half of the respondents (37%) agreed and strongly agreed (18) that the software is a helpful tool in increasing their motivation to learn entrepreneurial skills for the workplace.

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		18.1		37.5		27.8		5		8.1

Figure 9. Effects of the Software on Motivation

Item 9: Effects of the Software on Increasing Skills of Communication

Regarding the effects of the software on increasing the skills of communication of the staff, Figure 10 below illustrates that more than half of the participants were between agree (48%) and strongly agree (27%). Only a few participants were neutral (12%) while very few were between disagree (5%) and strongly disagree (3).

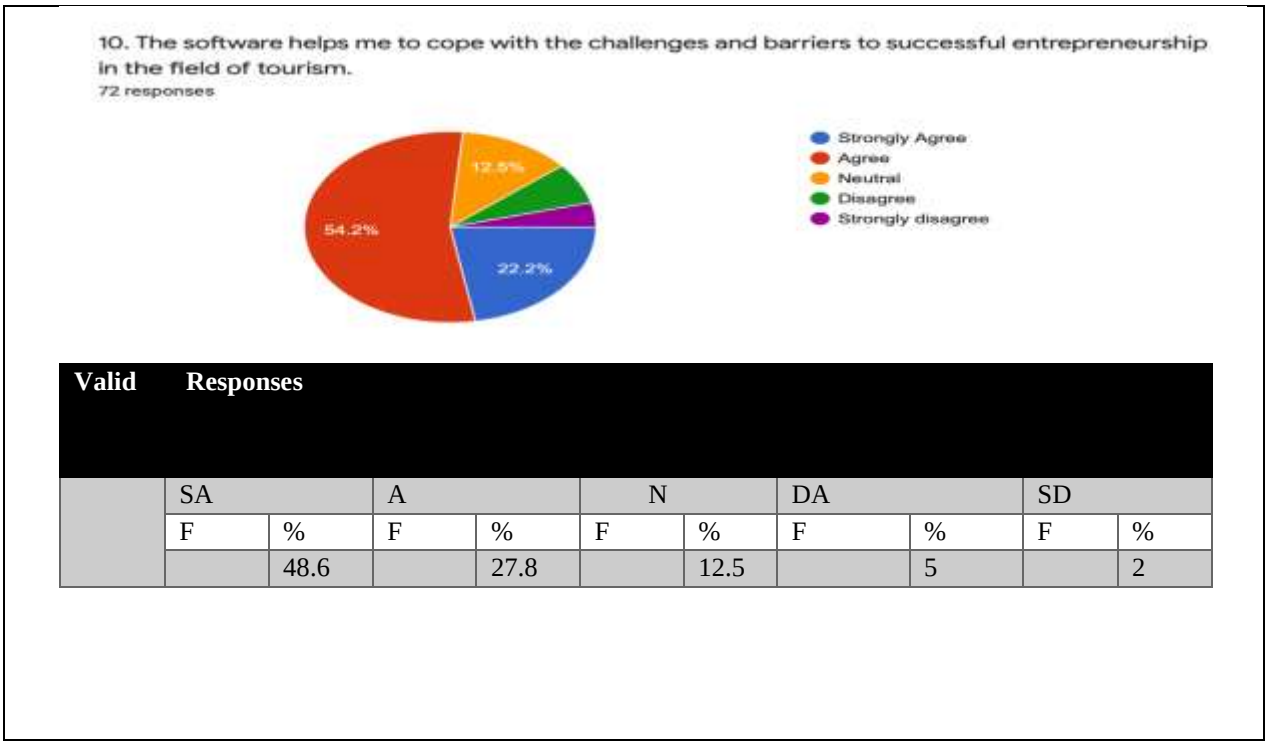


Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		48.6		27.8		12.5		5		2

Figure 10. Effects of the Software on Increasing Skills of Communication

Item 10: Importance of the Software in Handling the Challenges to Successful Entrepreneurship

Figure 11 below reveals that about two thirds of the participants were between agree (54%) and strongly agree (22%). The others were between neutral (12%), disagree (5) and strongly disagree (2).



Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		48.6		27.8		12.5		5		2

Figure 11. Importance of the Software in Handling the Challenges to Successful Entrepreneurship

4.2 Section Two Findings: Needs Analysis of the Omani Staff in Tourism and Hospitality Sectors as an Initial Step in Developing the Training Software

This section outlines the findings obtained from the second section of the questionnaire survey. The participants were given several open-ended questions to get in depth and rich information in response to the main question below. Therefore, this section is divided into several sub-sections regarding items related to the question below.

Q.2 What are the specific needs of the Omani staff in tourism and hospitality agencies regarding software development for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies?

Item 1: Kinds of Entrepreneurship Skills to be Included in the Software

When the participants were asked, "What kind of entrepreneurial skills do you think must be included in the software?" they gave various answers. Following Lackeus's (2014) framework, the suggested skills are outlined below in topics and headings. The skills are categorized into two main headings, Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills. Table 32 below illustrates the participants' responses in this regard.

Table 3. Kinds of Entrepreneurship Skills to be Included in the Software

Cognitive Skills	Knowledge	• Thinking out of the box • Self learning • Innovation skills • Intelligence

	Skill	* Managing or problem solving skills • Public speaking skills • Speaking confidently • Leadership skills • Technical skills • Language proficiency • Conducting quick research • Ability to learn • Finance skills(Budgeting, running business skills, creating a reasonable budget,) • Maintaining a growth mindset • Reading and analysing financial plans • Focus on selling • Selling skills • Marketing skills • Interpersonal skills (Interaction skills, persuasion, communication) • Critical thinking skills
Non-Cognitive Skills	Attitudes	• Self-efficacy • Proactiveness • Preservice • Tolerance

Item 2: Kinds of Activities to be Included in the Software

When the participants were asked, "What kinds of activities do you think must be included in the software?" they provided a range of activities. While some of the activities are curricular-similar to the normal ones that are practiced in the classroom, other activities are extracurricular-activities that are organized outside of the regular classroom or program to meet the learner interests. Table 4 below illustrates the suggested activities that are organized into two groups-curricular and extracurricular activities.

Table 4 .Activities to be Included in the Software

Activities to be Included in the Software	
Curricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities
Case studies	Tourism Guiding
Role play	competitions
Pair work and group work activities	Games
Presentations	Entertainment activities

Critical thinking	workshops
Training	Training courses
Problem-solving activities	tours
Writing business reports and letters	
Conduct research on marketing and developing new business opportunities;	

It is worth mentioning that some of the participants provided a brief description along with the suggested activities. Below are a few excerpts that are quoted directly from their responses. Some of the extractions include key themes that are underlined.

Excerpt 1

The software should provide different kinds of activities that contribute to enhancing the course, nevertheless, I prefer to include activities that more local…I mean the activities that represent the real situations or cases in our country. This is important because we learn how to solve problems properly plus we learn about the real entrepreneur scenarios.

Excerpt 2

I prefer activities that encourage Critical thinking, help me gain knowledge.

Excerpt 3
The software should include stories of successful businessmen and adventurers.

Important themes

- Authentic real entrepreneur scenarios.
- Local
- Promotions
- Stories of successful businessmen
- Risk Management
- Adventures
- myths about entrepreneurship
- interactive activities with experienced enterprises
- authentic activities that are practiced globally.
- Conducting research on marketing
- motivation

Item 3: Kinds of Topics Related to Entrepreneurship to be Included in the Software

The third question the participants were asked was "What kinds of topics related to entrepreneurship that must be Included in the Software?" In an answer to this question, the participants provided many topics representing various themes. However, a few topics are not related to the main subject matter of entrepreneurship. Therefore, only the topics that have direct or indirect relatedness are included in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Topics and Themes of the Entrepreneurship Training Software

Topics and Themes of the Entrepreneurship Training Software			
Tourism Business	Tourism System	Entrepreneurship in Tourism	Workplace Competencies
Marketing Tourism	Culture and Nature in Tourism	Training Employees	Workplace skills
customer relationship	Truism and Hospitality	steps of starting a new business	Business Language Skills
Enhancing the teamwork	technology in tourism	Dealing with the pressure and stress in Entrepreneurship	Skills of Communication
future Trends of business		Social entrepreneurship	Job Application
Leadership and Management in Tourism			Public Speaking
Financial management operations			
Risk Management			

Item 4: Materials Selection for the Software

The fourth important question was about the types of materials that must be selected for the training software. Thus, in response to the question "What materials do you think are the most interesting for you to be used in the software?" the participants provided some ideas. While some of the ideas were associating with the types of materials, others were associating with the characteristics of materials.

Table 6. Materials Selection for the Software

Types of materials	**Qualities of materials**
Videos	Authentic
Platform	Attractive
Websites	Not boring
Online chatting	Interactive
Photos	Easy design

All visual aids	Diversity of materials
Magazines	Materials with translation
Newspapers	Useful
Worksheets	

Item 5: Software Organization

According to the question "How do you want the software to be organized?" the participants provided many ideas that are referred to in terms of words and phrases. These ideas are listed below:

- From the easiest to the difficult
- From the most demanding to the lowest demanding
- Easy organization so that the reader will not find it difficult to use
- By topics and themes
- By skills
- In a specific not a general way
- In terms of competencies
- In terms of skills
- Attractive
- Uncomplicated
- Have a basic page which is include all of the things that have included and choose any icons and go for that page easily

Item 7: Context of the Given Examples

The participants were asked "Do you prefer the examples in each module should be from the Omani context or other international contexts?" The results show that the majority of the participants chose both contexts-the Omani and global contexts. The second rate was given to the Omani context, while very few participants chose the international context.

Item 8: Participants' Suggestions for Developing the Training Software

In response to the question below, the participants gave many suggestions for the development of the software.

Do you have any suggestions for developing our proposed software? Kindly, provide any comments or suggestions that you believe are important and contribute to developing a successful software course for enhancing entrepreneurship competencies in the field if tourism and hospitality.

1. The software should suit all ages and nationalities

2. "It is good if it includes photos with explanations"
3. The software should include cases and stories about successful entrainers
4. The software should include videos
5. The software should include many attractive things
6. "I have a few suggestions. 1. The software is organized into themes. 2. The software includes tasks and activities. 3. The software includes authentic materials".
7. The software should provide topics about tourism and entrepreneurship

5. Conclusion and Discussion of Findings

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

This section consists of two sub-sections. The first sub-section provides a discussion concerned with the participant's views on the effects of the expected training software in enhancing their entrepreneurship competencies. Section Two, on the other hand, discusses the findings associated with the participants' views regarding the process of developing the software as a digital training course.

5.2 Discussion of Section One Findings

This section discusses the findings that revealed the perceptions of the Omani staff towards the development of the training software for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies. The findings of this section are based on the question below, along with the derived conclusions and implications.

Q.1 What are the Perceptions of the Omani Staff towards the Development of the Software as a Training Digital Tool for Enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies?

The first conclusion that we can draw from the findings in response to the question above is that all the participants positively rated the significant role of the developed software that is expected to play in enhancing the entrepreneurial competencies of the staff and employees in the tourism sectors. This result is consistent with previous results obtained in the previous studies (such as Ferreras-Garcia et al., 2021; Iglesias-Sánchez et al., 2019; Sokhalingam et al., 2013). This finding reflects the participants' awareness of the significant role of the software in enhancing many aspects of entrepreneurial competencies such as understanding, knowledge, workplace skills, business, and personal entrepreneurial skills, as well as motivation to enhance their professional development. These conclusions, in turn, lead to another conclusion that is the necessity of considering and highlighting entrepreneurial competencies as a key component in curriculum design and training courses (Lackéus, 2014; 2015; Yussof et al., 2019)

The second finding shows that there were slight discrepancies in frequencies and percentages among the items. The highest level of perception was in Item 5, which refers to the importance of the developed software in improving personal entrepreneurial skills such as marketing, innovation, risk-taking, persistence, and the like. The percentages of agreement and strongly agreement were (81.1) and (48.6), respectively, and this reveals the strongest satisfaction of the participants regarding this aspect. This result aligns with Lackeus' Framework (2014), which outlined several entrepreneurial competencies described in terms of cognitive and non-cognitive competencies.

The third finding shows that the second-highest rate was given to Item 10, which relates to the role of the developed software in helping the participants to cope with the challenges and difficulties they may face in the field of tourism and hospitality. The percentages were (54.2) and (22.2) between agree and strongly disagreed. This result matches several theoretical perspectives, such as "the human capital theory, the entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and self-

determination theory," which suggest that entrepreneurship education suits the needs of the students because it has the potential to provide skills and knowledge that prepare them for future careers (Boldureanu et al., 2020).

The fourth finding concerns the participants' low rate for the role of the developed software in raising staff's motivation to learn entrepreneurial skills in the workplace. Surprisingly, the rates of agreeing and strongly disagree were between (18.1) and (37.5), respectively. These are the lowest rates in comparison to the other items. This finding, however, mismatches with the perceptions of many teachers and educators worldwide who advocate that relying solely on traditional teaching and lectures may not lead to deep and practical learning unless it is blended with other sources such as digital tools and platforms (Greenhow and Lewin, 2016; Puentedura, 2009). Experts in educational technology have pointed out that it is essential that teachers and curriculum developers in higher academic settings need to take advantage of the potential of technology and LMS to meet better the needs of the students (Davis et al., 2015; Puentedura, 2009).

Based on the results of the first section, we can draw a practical implication concerning the proposed idea of initiating digital software by tourism agencies as well as institutions. Initiating the software by universities and institutions helps promote the entrepreneurial skills of the graduates to prepare them to get into the job market. The assumption behind this software means that the institutes of tourism should reconsider the vision and mission of entrepreneurship. This requires developing courses offering entrepreneurship, whether software or hardware, and designing effective tasks and activities that assist students in gaining knowledge and skills of entrepreneurship that are required for the workplace.

5.3 Discussion of Section Two Findings: Articulation of the Software Based on Learner Needs

The aim of section two of the questionnaire survey is to explore the specific needs of the Omani staff when developing the entrepreneurial training software. In answer to the question below, the data analysis shows a range of findings and conclusions.

Q.2 What are the specific needs of the Omani staff in tourism and hospitality agencies regarding the development of software for enhancing their entrepreneurial competencies?

Finding One: Skills and Competencies Provided by the Software

The first finding reveals that the tourism staffs prefer many skills to be included in the development of the software, such as critical thinking, marketing skills, technical skills, and the like. To present sensible results, the skills were categorized in terms of cognitive skills and non-cognitive skills, as shown in Table 4.1. The set of skills that were suggested by the participants was not different from the set of skills recommended by experts in the field of entrepreneurship (See Lackéus, 2015).

Finding two: Activities in the Software

The second finding concerns the types of activities to be included in the training software. Interestingly, many types of activities have been suggested, such as the ones that were presented in Table 4.3. While some of the activities were considered curricular activities-those that can be practiced inside the classroom or the institutional setting, others are extracurricular-those that are practiced outside the educational context. This implies that digital software, like other regular courses, must comprise various activities based on learner needs (Nation and Macalister, 2010; Hutchinson and Waters,1991; Brown, 2009). This finding confirms the models and frameworks of digital software that highlight the role of activities in the effectiveness of the software. For example, Lackéus (2015) provided a model of entrepreneurial education in which he categorized the types of activities in accordance with the educational assignments, emotional events, and situations.

Finding Three: Software Content

The third finding in relation to the types of topics of entrepreneurship to be included in the software shows that many topics were suggested based on the participants' needs. Table (4.4) includes these topics that were organized into four major themes such as "Tourism Business," "Tourism System," "Entrepreneurship in Tourism," and "Workplace Competencies." Interestingly, this finding leads to the conclusion that the participants are aware of their needs in the field of tourism entrepreneurship. Awareness or self-awareness is very important in any workplace context because it is considered the initial step that leads toward good performance. The second important conclusion in this regard relates to the importance of selecting the suitable content-a combination of topics and themes based on the learner's needs. This finding supports the literature on course design that the content takes into account what learners want and what they need (Nation and Macalister, 2010; Hutchinson and waters, 1991; Al-Khalidi, 2021b).

Finding Four: Material Selection

The fourth finding is associated with materials selection. Table 2.4 illustrates a very interesting combination of materials such as videos, platforms, photos, online chatting, visual aids, etc. In addition, Table 4.5 shows a set of qualities of materials that need to be considered when designing the software. Based on this finding, a set of conclusions can be derived. The first conclusion reflects the participants' interest in multimedia. According to Mayer's theory of Multi-Media, "People learn more deeply from words and graphics than from words alone" (2009, p.1).

This assertion is one of the basic principles of multimedia instructions in the digital education field. This, in turn, leads to another conclusion that relates to the importance of technology integration into course design to meet the needs and preferences of learners, especially the youth, who are highly obsessed with using digital tools such as social media, smartphone apps, Google Docs, and the like. Their obsession with technology is not different from the views of many educators (such as Brown and Lee, 2014; Aliva, 2019; Feist and Reid, 2018; Al-Khalidi, 2021a; 2021b), who hold the view that technology integration plays a significant role in teaching and learning. For example, (Brown and Lee, 2014) considered technology as an effective method that contributes to creating motivation, engagement, fun, interaction, and dynamism in the classroom.

Another conclusion in relation to this finding is associating with the participant's views on the design and selection of materials that, to a large extent, correspond to the views of experts in materials design (e.g., Richards, 2007; Tomlinson, 2003; Al-Khalidi, 2019). These experts provided important checklists and tips to be used as guidelines when designing courses, lessons, or any other instructions. Their focus was on selecting materials that are interesting, motivating, and relevant to the goals and outcomes of a program. In addition, the finding shows the participants' interest in video materials, and this, in turn, confirms the feature of authenticity in designing courses or lessons. Richards (2007) strongly recommended considering authenticity in selecting materials and activities.

Finding Five: Software Organization

The fifth finding reveals that there were some discrepancies in the participants' views regarding how to organize the content of the software. However, the discrepancies are very important in designing a course or software, and they can be viewed as a set of underpinning criteria. This finding leads to very important conclusions. The first finding indicates that the process of developing the software is not a static or standard process. Rather, the participants portrayed the software design as a dynamic process offering software and course designers more flexibility regarding the starting point and the mechanism of articulating the elements of a course.

The second conclusion is that there is no linear mechanism when articulating the elements of the software. The participants' views in this study agree with modern approaches and models of course design proposed by some experts (such as Al-Khalidi, 2020; Graves, 2000, Richards, 2007; Nation and Macalister, 2010).

- From the easiest to the difficult
- From the most demanding to the lowest demanding
- Easy organization so that the reader will not find it difficult to use
- By topics and themes
- By skills
- In a specific, not a general way
- In terms of competencies
- In terms of skills
- Attractive
- Uncomplicated
- Have a basic page that includes all of the things that have been included and choose any icons and go for that page easily

Finding Six: Context of the Examples

The sixth finding reveals the participants' views on whether the examples provided in texts and activities should be from Omani context or global contexts. In spite of the differences in their responses, the participants prefer both contexts. This finding leads to the conclusion that both criteria-contextuality and authenticity need to be taken into account when designing training software.

Finding 7: Participants' Suggestions for Developing the Training Software

Finding seven reveals that the participants provided a range of suggestions reflecting their conceptualization of the process of software development. The first conclusion based on this finding is that most of the suggestions are directly related to the process of software design or articulation. For example, the first set of suggestions focused on using video materials in the course. The second set of suggestions focused on including case stories about successful entrepreneurs in the world. The third set of suggestions focused on including interesting activities. The fourth set of suggestions focused on the organization of the software. The fifth set of suggestions focused on the suitability and significance of the software.

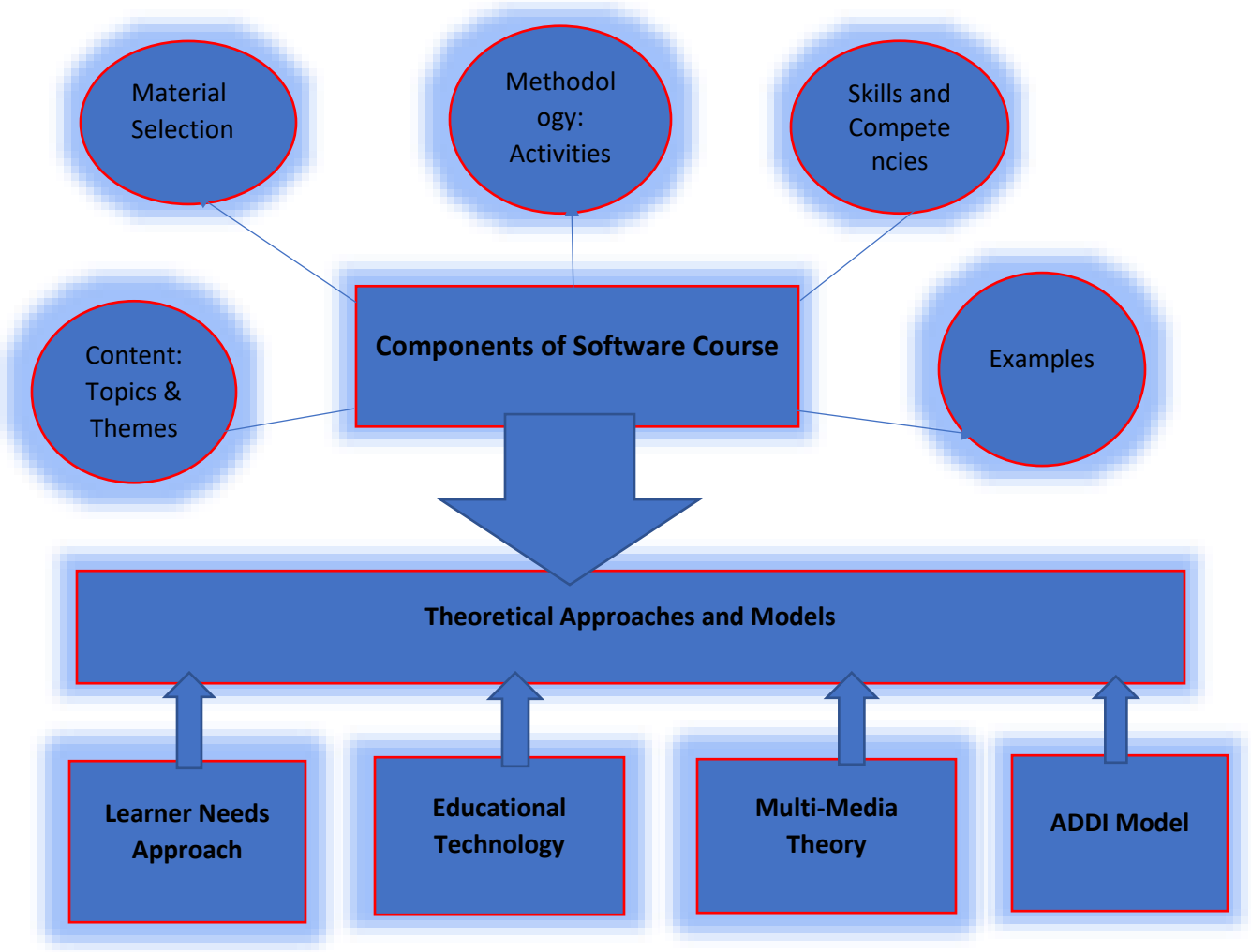


Figure 12 . A Framework of a Training Software Course Based on Learner Needs

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