Omani Employment and the Development of Careers in the Hotel Sector in the Sultanate of Oman

Masooma Khamis Mahmood Al-Balushi, BSc., MSc.

Thesis submitted to the Cardiff School of Management in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

2008

Cardiff School of Management,
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff,
Colchester Avenue, Cardiff,
CF23 9XR
United Kingdom
DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted for any other degree. I further declare that this thesis is the result of my own independent work and investigation, except where otherwise stated (a bibliography is appended). Finally, I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and abstract to be made available to outside organisations.

Masooma Khamis Al-Balushi (Candidate)

Dr. Claire Haven-Tang (Director of studies)

Prof. Annette Pritchard (Supervisor)
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the soul of my mother and father. Although they are not here to give me strength and support, I always feel their presence encouraging me to achieve my goals in life. To them I dedicate this work.

My sister Rahma has been like a mother to me and whose constant support was a driving force for me to complete this thesis.

My brother Mahmood has continuously believed in me as a father. His encouragement is always uplifting and his faith in me never fails.

I also dedicate this work to my niece Mariam, and my nephews Qaboos and Qabas, for being patient with me during the difficult times I faced during my research and who have always been an inspiration for me.

This thesis is also dedicated to my nephews Qais and AbuZaid for their patience for being away from them for all these years, and to all who are interested in a preview of this research, I dedicate this work.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Completion of this thesis has been a part of my commitment to lifelong learning and the journey of writing this Ph.D. thesis has been of challenges, but the rewards are immeasurable.

First and foremost, gratitude goes to God for providing me with the strength to complete this journey.

It has been a long journey and completing this work is definitely a high point in my academic career. I could not have come this far without the assistance of many individuals who have inspired, guided, and helped whom I want to express my deepest appreciation to them.

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Clair Haven, and Professor Annette Pritchard, their wide knowledge and their logical way of thinking, continuous guidance, and advice encouragement have been great value for me. Special thanks go to Professor Eleri Jones, her understanding, encouraging, and personal guidance has provided a good basis for the present thesis.

I wish to express my warm and sincere thanks to Dr. Sheena Westwood for her supervision and guidance through the early stages of my research.

Deep and sincere thanks to the father, and the great builder of the Sultanate of Oman, His Majesty the Sultan Qaboos, who inspires and encourages all Omanis to seek the education in and out the country.

Sincere appreciation goes to His Excellency, Juma Al-Juma for his help through the stage of data collection, and statistical data from the Ministry of Manpower.

My sincerest appreciation goes to Khalid Al-Zidjali for his endless support and encouragement.

During this work I have collaborated with many colleagues for whom I have great regard, and I wish to extend my warmest thanks to all those who have helped me with my work.

My special gratitude goes to the government officials, tourism experts, hotel managers, and hotel employees who agreed to participate in the interviews of this research. Special appreciation is extended to all who have helped me along the way I cannot mention them by name, but they know who they are. In particular I want to thank Dr. Asma Al-Busiadi, Khalid Al-Muharami, Murthadha Al-Ajmi, and Inas Ali for their help and support during the studying period in Cardiff.

My deepest thanks go to the Sultan Qaboos University for providing with the opportunity to join this Ph.D. programme. I extend my sincerest gratitude to the staff and colleagues in Cardiff School of Management, University of Wales, Institute, Cardiff. Thank you all.
ABSTRACT

The vision of 2020 for Oman focuses on two main areas; the first area is to diversify the country’s economy away from its reliance on oil. The second area is to focus on the Omanisation Plan (OP) through development and increasing the Omani workforce in all different sectors in the country. Tourism in the Sultanate of Oman as an alternative to dependence on oil has become one of the economic engines for the country’s development. Hotels are a cornerstone in the tourism industry. This study focused on the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector, and enhanced understanding of the issues relating to hotel employment in an Islamic/Omani context which threatens the feasibility of economic diversification through tourism for the Sultanate of Oman.

This study adopted a case study approach, and was carried out in four stages. The first stage was the analysis of extant literature and documents to develop a theoretical background for the research. The second stage involved document analysis as well as incorporating semi-structured interviews with government officials and tourism experts to explore the extent of the implementation of OP in the hotel sector. The third stage involved conducting semi-structured interviews with hotel employers and hotel employees to explore the main constraints that impact on the recruitment and retention of Omanis in the hotel sector, and the main social and cultural factors and the Islamic doctrines limiting the implementation of OP in the sector. Final stage was to provide recommendations to address the employment issues in the hotel sector.

The study concludes that there are different issues facing the hotel industry in the Sultanate as any other country in the world such as: labour turnover and poor staff retention, issues of recruitment and selection, lack of job continuity and job security, low remuneration and poor working conditions, qualifications and training, and skills gaps and skills shortages, and lack of foreign language skills. Conversely, the industry in the Sultanate has its other issues with regards the social and cultural issues as an Arabic and Islamic country. These issues summarised as: religious issues, family and social attitudes towards hospitality careers, image of the industry amongst Omani society, and hospitality career reputation. Although these issues can be evident elsewhere in the world, however in terms of religion, these issues can be only unique to Arab and Muslim countries. Notwithstanding, these issues are shared by other Arab and Muslim countries, yet, the extent of applying these principles varies from person to another in the one society and from country to another.

The main contributions of this study include its pioneering contribution to the body of knowledge of the Omani employment profile in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman. This study is the first study in the Sultanate to explore the employment issues in the hotel industry in terms of exploring the social and cultural issues relating to the industry, as well as the Islamic perspectives of working in the hotel industry.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ................................................................. i  
DEDICATION .............................................................. ii  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT ....................................................... iii  
ABSTRACT ................................................................. iv  
TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................... v  
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................... x  
TABLE OF FIGURES ...................................................... xi  
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .............................................. xii  
REFERENCES ............................................................. ii  
APPENDICES ............................................................... v  

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Diversifying the Omani Economy .................................. 16  
1.2 Contextualising the Research Project ............................... 24  
1.3 Research Journey .................................................... 26  
1.4 Research Questions .................................................. 30  
1.5 Primary Aim and Objectives of the Study ......................... 30  
1.6 Thesis Structure ..................................................... 31  

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction .......................................................... 37  
2.2 Human Resource Management ...................................... 38  
2.3 Hospitality Sector ................................................... 41  
2.3.1 Defining the Hospitality Sector ................................. 41  
2.3.2 Importance and the Growth of the Industry .................. 42  
2.4 Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry ................... 44  
2.4.1 Career Paths in the Hospitality Industry ..................... 45  
2.5 Skills Shortage ....................................................... 49  
2.6 Labour Market ........................................................ 52  
2.7 Expatriate Employment ............................................. 57
## Table of Contents

2.8 Hospitality Industry Issues............................................................................ 62
  2.8.1 Employment Issues................................................................................... 64
    2.8.1.1 Recruitment and Selection................................................................. 64
    2.8.1.2 Aesthetic Labour ............................................................................... 70
    2.8.1.3 Emotional Labour.............................................................................. 73
    2.8.1.4 Worker Identity................................................................................... 78
    2.8.1.5 Labour Turnover and Staff Retention.............................................. 79
    2.8.1.6 Job Continuity and Security............................................................... 83
    2.8.1.7 Remuneration and Working Conditions.......................................... 85
      a) Remuneration......................................................................................... 85
      b) Working Conditions................................................................................ 85
  2.8.2 Education and Training Issues................................................................. 88
    2.8.2.1 Education, Training and Development............................................. 88
      a) Cost of Training...................................................................................... 93
      b) Type and Level of Training .................................................................... 95
  2.8.3 Cultural and Social Issues......................................................................... 96
    2.8.3.1 Social Attitudes.................................................................................. 96
    2.8.3.2 Family Influence on Career Constructs........................................... 99
  2.9 Religion and Society.....................................................................................104
    2.9.1 Muslim Perspectives of Working in the Hotel Industry........................108
    2.9.2 Muslim Women in the Hotel Industry..................................................111
  2.10 Image of Hospitality Careers......................................................................114
  2.11 Summary......................................................................................................117

## CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXTUALISING THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

3.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................123
  3.2 Oman Context ...............................................................................................123
    3.2.1 Geographical Location .......................................................................123
    3.2.2 Climate and Topography ....................................................................125
    3.2.3 Population, Religion and Language..................................................126
    3.2.4 People of Oman.....................................................................................127
  3.3 Oman After 1970 ..........................................................................................128
# Table of Contents

3.4 The Government and State Institutions ........................................ 130  
3.5 Woman’s Contribution to the Development of Oman .......................... 132  
3.6 The Omani Economy .............................................................. 134  
3.7 Education and Training in Oman .............................................. 137  
3.8 Tourism and Hospitality Development in Oman ............................... 139  
  3.8.1 Natural Assets ........................................................................ 143  
  3.8.2 The Country’s Heritage ......................................................... 145  
3.9 Employment in Public and Private Sector ...................................... 146  
  3.9.1 Public Sector .......................................................................... 146  
  3.9.2 Private Sector ......................................................................... 147  
3.10 Employment Legislations ............................................................... 149  
  3.10.1 Contract of Work ................................................................. 150  
  3.10.2 Working Hours in the Private Sector ....................................... 151  
3.11 Omanisation Plan ........................................................................ 152  
3.12 Omanisation Plan for the Tourism Sector ...................................... 155  
3.13 Omanisation for the Hotel Sector ................................................... 160  
3.14 Importance of Human Resource Development in Oman .................. 172  
3.15 Tourism and Hospitality Education in Oman ................................. 174  
  3.15.1 Department of Tourism in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) ........ 176  
  3.15.2 Oman College Tourism .......................................................... 176  
  3.15.3 National Hospitality Institute (NHI) ....................................... 176  
3.16 Concept of Career-Paths in Hospitality and Tourism in Oman .......... 177  
3.17 Summary .................................................................................. 179  

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH APPROACH  
4.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 185  
4.2 Introduction to Social Research ..................................................... 185  
4.3 Research Paradigms ....................................................................... 186  
4.4 Theoretical Approach .................................................................... 188  
  4.4.1 Epistemology: Constructionism .............................................. 188  
  4.4.2 Theoretical Perspective: Interpretivism .................................... 190  
  4.4.3 Phenomenology ...................................................................... 191
4.5 Practical Approach: ................................................................. 193
  4.5.1 Qualitative Versus Quantitative ........................................ 194
  4.5.2 Methodology: Using a Case Study: OMAN .......................... 196
    4.5.2.1 Types of Case Studies ............................................. 198
4.6 Sampling .................................................................................. 200
  4.6.1 Sampling Technique for Qualitative Research ....................... 201
  4.6.2 Sampling Technique for this Study ..................................... 203
  4.6.2 Representativeness of the Qualitative Sample ....................... 205
4.7 Methods of Data Collection .................................................... 206
  4.7.1 Document and Archival Material Analysis ........................... 208
  4.7.2 Interviews: Objective Three ............................................. 209
    4.7.2.1 Types of Interviews .................................................. 210
  4.7.3 Stages of the Interviews to Achieve Objective Three .............. 212
    a) Stage One of the Interviews ............................................. 213
    b) Stage Two of the Interviews ............................................ 214
4.8 Transcribing and Translating the Interviews ............................ 216
4.9 Coding ...................................................................................... 217
  4.9.1 Coding Government officials: ............................................ 217
    1- Coding Tourism Academics .............................................. 217
    2- Coding Tourism Consultants ............................................. 218
    3- Coding Consultants from Ministry of Manpower ..................... 218
  4.9.2 Coding Hotel Human Resource Managers ............................. 218
  4.9.3 Coding Hotel Employees .................................................. 218
4.10 Analysing the Interviews ....................................................... 219
4.11 Ethical Consideration ............................................................ 219
4.12 Reliability, Validity and Triangulation .................................... 221
  4.12.1 Reliability ...................................................................... 221
  4.12.2 Validity .......................................................................... 222
  4.12.3 Triangulation ................................................................... 223
4.13 Generalisability of Results ..................................................... 225
## Table of Contents

**CHAPTER FIVE: CONSTRAINTS TO OMANISATION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**

5.1 Introduction .......................................................... 229  
5.2 Main Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry .................. 230  
5.3 Employment Issues .................................................. 231    
  5.3.1 Recruitment and Selection .................................. 231  
  5.3.2 High Labour Turnover and Poor Staff Retention ............... 237  
  5.3.3 Lack of Job Continuity and Job Security .................. 244  
  5.3.4 Low Remuneration ........................................... 247  
  5.3.5 Poor Working Conditions .................................. 251  
5.4 Education and Training Issues .................................... 252    
  5.4.1 Qualifications and Training ................................ 252  
  5.4.2 Cost of Training ............................................ 256  
  5.4.3 Skills Gaps and Skills Shortage ............................ 259  
  5.4.4 Lack of Foreign Language Skills ............................ 261  
5.5 Cultural and Social Issues ........................................ 263  
  5.5.1 Religious Issues ............................................. 263    
      a) Unlawful Food and Beverages .......................... 264  
      b) Unlawful Activities ...................................... 266  
      c) Source of Income .......................................... 267  
      d) Mixing Between Males and Females .................... 268  
      e) Female Outfit .............................................. 271  
  5.5.2 Family and Social Attitudes towards Hospitality Careers ...... 272    
      a) Region of Origin ........................................ 273  
      b) Family Influence on Career Choice .................... 274  
      c) Family Obligations ...................................... 276  
      d) Marriage Opportunity ................................... 278  
5.5.3 Image of Hospitality Careers amongst Omani Society ............ 279  
5.5.4 Hospitality Career Reputation ................................ 282  
5.7 Summary .............................................................. 287
### CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 292
6.2 Overview of the Issues in the Omani Hotel Industry and Responsibilities of Stakeholders .......................................................................................................................... 292
6.3 Recommendations for Government ............................................................................. 295
6.4 Recommendations for Employers (Industry) ............................................................... 298
6.5 Recommendations for Educational Institutions ......................................................... 301

### CHAPTER SEVEN: FINAL OVERVIEWS

7.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 305
7.2 Review of Research Objectives .................................................................................. 305
   7.2.1 Objective One ........................................................................................................ 305
   7.2.2 Objective Two ....................................................................................................... 308
   7.2.3 Objective Three .................................................................................................... 312
   7.2.4 Objective Four ..................................................................................................... 315
7.3 Major Findings ........................................................................................................... 315
   7.3.1 Employment Issues ............................................................................................ 315
   7.3.2 Education and Training Issues .......................................................................... 317
   7.3.3 Cultural and Social Issues .................................................................................. 318
7.4 Contributions ............................................................................................................. 322
   7.4.1 Contribution to Theory ....................................................................................... 322
   7.4.2 Contribution to Practice ..................................................................................... 322
7.5 Limitations ................................................................................................................ 323
7.6 Opportunities for Further Research .......................................................................... 325
7.7 Personal Thoughts ..................................................................................................... 326
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Number of Employees in the Tourism Sector in 2002 ................................................. 158
Table 3.2: The Current Number of Omani and Non-Omani Employees Classified by Job Titles, Educational Qualifications and Experiences in 2002 .................................................. 159
Table 3.3: Number of Inbound Visitors in 2003 and 2004 by Nationality .................................. 161
Table 3.4: Number of Inbound Visitors by Purpose of Visit in 2003 and 2004 .......................... 162
Table 3.5: Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2003 and 2004 .................................................................................................................. 164
Table 3.6: Number of Hotels and Rooms by Region and Class in 2003 ................................... 167
Table 3.7: Number of Employees by Class of Hotel for 2001, 2002 and 2003. ...................... 170
Table 4.1: Number of Interview with Tourism Experts and Government officials (Stage One) ........................................................................................................................................ 214
Table 4.2: Number of Interviews with Hotel Human Resource Managers and Hotel Employees (Stage Two) ........................................................................................................ 216
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Selected Middle East Proven Oil Reserves</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.2</td>
<td>Thesis Structure</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>The Three Main Responsibilities of HRM</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>Hospitality Industry Issues in Categories</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>The Recruitment Process</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.4</td>
<td>The Training Gap</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Map of the Sultanate of Oman</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Shangri-La project in Oman</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>The Wave Project</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>The Blue City Project</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.5</td>
<td>Dhofar Region</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.6</td>
<td>Number of Employees in the Tourism Sector in 2002</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.7</td>
<td>Relative Share of Inbound Visitors in 2003 by Nationality</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.8</td>
<td>Number of Inbound Visitors by Purpose of Visit in 2003 and 2004</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.9</td>
<td>Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2003</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.10</td>
<td>Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2004</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.11</td>
<td>Number of Hotels by Class for 2003 in Oman</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.12</td>
<td>Number of Hotels by Class for 2003 in Muscat</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.13</td>
<td>A Schematic Model Illustrating the Concept of Career Path in Hospitality and Tourism in the Sultanate of Oman</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.14</td>
<td>SWOT analysis for Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Elements of Research Process</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Epistemology, Theoretical perspective, Methodology, and Methods Adapted for the Research</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3</td>
<td>Stages of Data Collection</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4</td>
<td>Levels of Decision Making in Research Design</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5</td>
<td>Sources of Evidence in Case Studies</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.6</td>
<td>An Embedded Single - Case Design</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.7</td>
<td>Methods Used to Achieve the Aim and Objectives of the Research</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Issues in the Hotel Industry in the Sultanate of Oman</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.1</td>
<td>Issues in the Hotel Industry and its Relation to Implementation of Omanisation Plan</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.2</td>
<td>Different Stakeholders Working to Assist The Omanisation Plan</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBL</td>
<td>Billion Barrels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBL/D</td>
<td>Billion Barrels Per Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHA</td>
<td>British Hospitality Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA</td>
<td>British Medical Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Central Bank of Oman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>Compensation paid to Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Energy Information Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOR</td>
<td>Enhanced Oil Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINCORP</td>
<td>Financial Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIs</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTF</td>
<td>Hospitality Training Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBE</td>
<td>International Bureau of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICE</td>
<td>International Conference of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEBA</td>
<td>Midland Education and Business Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHC</td>
<td>Ministry of Heritage and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSAL</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBER</td>
<td>National Bureau of Economic Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBER</td>
<td>National Bureau of Economic Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEE</td>
<td>National Economies Encyclopaedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
<td>National Vocational Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHA</td>
<td>Oman Tourism and Hospitality Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCCI</td>
<td>Oman Champers of Commerce and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OER</td>
<td>Oman Economic Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGJ</td>
<td>Oil &amp; Gas Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OITE</td>
<td>Oman International Trade and Exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMR</td>
<td>Omani Rial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>Omanisation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSSL</td>
<td>Oman Social Security Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASI</td>
<td>Public Authority for Social Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIL</td>
<td>Parson International Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEP</td>
<td>Sanad Manpower Employment Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQU</td>
<td>Sultan Qaboos University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Diversifying the Omani Economy .................................................. 16
1.2 Contextualising the Research Project ....................................... 24
1.3 Research Journey ................................................................. 26
1.4 Research Questions ............................................................. 30
1.5 Primary Aim and Objectives of the Study .............................. 30
1.6 Thesis Structure ................................................................. 31
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Diversifying the Omani Economy

As sources of oil steadily deplete in the Middle East, countries in the region are increasingly focusing their efforts on identifying new sources of income and diversifying their revenue base. The situation for the Sultanate of Oman is no different from other Middle Eastern countries. A rough estimate based on the country’s oil reserves and its oil production average in 2002 showed that Oman has just over 17 years of oil production left before its oil reserves depleted (OER, 2004).

Given this situation, it is not surprising that Oman is quickly looking to diversify its economy particularly through developing its nascent tourism industry. Oman’s activity in promoting the tourism industry reflects its efforts to diversify the economy as well as to generate jobs for the large number of young Omanis seeking jobs. The government has repeatedly stressed its desire to promote tourism to the extent that it does not clash with local traditions and culture on the one hand, but enough that it will help to achieve the country’s objectives of diversification and ‘Omanisation’ as outlined in the Vision 2020 (Pujol and Forster, 2007) strategic plan and its long-term objectives on the other.

This chapter presents a brief introduction to the Omani economy. It includes the economic impact of tourism in Oman. It also provides an overview of the research problem and the motives for the author’s research interest into Omani employment and the development of careers in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman. Identifying the research question and stating the overall aim and objectives of the research is the final
scene in this chapter. The chapter concludes by specifying the research objectives and
gives a précised overview of the thesis structure.

The long term plan Vision 2020, the Sixth Five-Year (2001-2005) Development Plan
for tourism, emphasises the shift of the country’s economy away from its reliance on
oil; towards the development of the Omani workforce to meet an expected increase of
demand for labour in the sector on one hand and an increase in the rate of Omanisation
to 50% by 2005 and 80% by 2020 on the other (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

Before the discovery and exploitation of oil and natural gas in the mid-1960s, Oman’s
economy consisted mostly of agriculture, fishing, and traditional crafts, such as boat-
making. While Oman’s economy maintains these largely traditional sectors, it also has a
rapidly-growing modern sector based on oil (Ministry of Information, 2002). The oil
sector emerges among all economic sectors as the most important sector according to its
contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP), export earning and government
revenues. Oman’s economy is heavily reliant on oil revenues, which account for about
75% of the country’s export earning and 40% of its GDP. During 2006, as reported in
Energy Information Administration (EIA):

Oman’s real GDP grew at an estimated rate of 4.2%, down from 5.7% in
2005. The slowdown in economic growth occurred largely as a result of
declining oil production in Oman. To help offset these declines, the
government has devoted considerable resources to new exploration and
production activities, enhanced oil recovery projects, and introduced
policies aimed at diversifying the country’s economy away from the oil
sector

(EIA, 2007:1)
The importance of the sector also stems from its strong indirect effect on the various national economic sectors; first, through the circulation of its revenues internally by government expenditure, and secondly, through its linkages with other sectors (Ministry of National Economy, 2001). The two prominent features of the oil sector are the fluctuations in the international price oil and its non-renewable nature. In accordance with this, Oman's development strategy aims to reduce reliance on oil through diversification of the national production base (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

These aspirations are reliant on the optimal utilization of the nation's oil revenues. Oman aims to both reduce oil revenues to support and sustain economic development whilst retaining sufficient reserves to safe-guard future economic interests (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

According to Oil and Gas Journal (OGJ), proven oil reserves in Oman stood at 5.5 billion barrels (bbl) as of January 2007. Oman's petroleum deposits were discovered in 1962, decades after most of those of its neighbors. Moreover, Oman's oil fields are generally smaller, more widely scattered, less productive, and pose higher production costs than in other Persian Gulf countries. The average well in Oman produces only around 400 barrels per day (bbl/d), about one-tenth the volume per well of those in neighboring countries. To compensate, Oman uses a variety of Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) techniques (EIA, 2007:2)

Consequently, the government of Oman has developed a strategy to create a national economy based on increasing private enterprise. The Sultanate's strategy is predicated on using its oil revenues, which are small by Middle Eastern standards, e.g. in comparison to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, (see Figure 1.1) which shows that the oil reserves as reported in 2007 for
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi are 259.8 and 93.2 billion barrels (bbl) respectively, meanwhile the reserves for the Sultanate are 5.5 bbl.

Figure 1.1: Selected Middle East Proven Oil Reserves

Source: Energy Information Administration (EIA), 2007

Therefore, to finance its initial modernisation of the basic infrastructure and education and development the government has focused on different areas. The first area is the mineral sector. Oman has rich deposits of gold, copper, chromites, asbestos, manganese, gypsum, limestone, marble, and coal. Manufacturing, which is export-oriented due to Oman's small domestic market, is also being stressed. Growth in this sector would require state-of-the-art technology and a well-qualified workforce, and it would reduce Oman's reliance on non-renewable resources, such as oil and gas, for revenue.
The second area of development is agriculture. Since Oman has a diverse landscape, which supports a wide variety of products. For instance in the Jebel Akhdar mountain range, roses and pomegranates grow in abundance for the local market. In the monsoon areas of the Dhofar region coconuts, bananas, papayas and animal fodder are the main products. In the interior region, dates, limes, and wheat are produced (TED, 1998), with dates accounting for about 90% of the country’s agricultural production (Arab net, 2002). In conjunction with agriculture, fishing is considered to be a major area of expansion in Oman with Omani boats having easy access to the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf, in addition to taking care of trade and financial services (TED, 1998).

In addition to these areas, the other emergent sector which has been identified by the government as offering significant growth potential is that of tourism (Ministry of National Economy, 2001). Although tourism is a relatively new industry in Oman, it is widely acknowledged that it has the potential to play a vital economic and social role in the country, and a number of competent stakeholders are committed to exploiting the potential (Negm, 2004). Tourism has grown to be one of the world’s largest service industries, globally; it is ranked third in the growth leagues before, for instance, the oil industry which is ranked as the fifth growth industry (Clair, 2002:2).

The tourism sector in the Sultanate is distinguished by its broad and strong interlacing relations with other sectors, such as agriculture and services. Therefore the development of the tourism sector is considered one of the most effective mechanisms for the incessant growth of the national economy (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).
One of the main goals of tourism in Oman is to increase tourism's contribution to the GDP to 5% by the end of 2020 (Ministry of National Economy, 2001) and to create more employment opportunities for thousands of Omani graduates. The tourism industry seems to have the potential to be a valuable employer for the growing numbers of graduates in Oman. The Ministry of Education reports that the number of high school graduates is rapidly increasing every year. For instance, in 2000-2001 the total number of students graduating from high school was 104,908; 50,716 of these were males and 54,192 were females (Ministry of Education, 2001). However, in 2006-2007 the total number of high school graduates increased by 137,697, with 71,470 males, and 66,227 females (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The economic benefits generated by tourism have encouraged the government of the Sultanate of Oman to consider tourism as a sector of strategic importance. The sector's ability to create employment complements the government's commitment to the Omanisation Plan (OP) which aims to increase the number of Omanis working in different sectors. Omanisation is defined as getting occupations and professions localised. Literally, from the Arabic linguist perspective, the word Omanisation which in Arabic means 'Ta'ameen' has its root from the word Oman, and is considered as occupying a place and believes it as a home. In the Sultanate of Oman, Omanisation is defined as the phasing out of foreign labour, replacing it with Omani citizens. Such a process is conducted according to pre-designed programmes predicated on needs from which training and qualifications might be advocated in a determined period of time. The Omanisation plan will be discussed in detail in chapter three.
One of the main challenges faced by the private sector is the current highly-diversified workforce of the hotel sector in Oman, and the pressure from the public to create more employment opportunities for the increasing number of Omani graduates. As there are few opportunities for young Omanis to enter the workplace without some form of tertiary education or training, the key challenge is to provide an adequate number of places for the growing number of school leavers. In June 2003, there were 41,568 school leavers matriculating but only 2,400 places available at Sultan Qaboos University (the only government-funded university) with another 2,400 places available at 14 private licensed institutions. According to the government statistics, there were 1,976 students studying at vocational training centres in the academic year 2002/2003 and a total of 2,626 students studying at the five industrial technical colleges in the same year (Ministry of National Economy, 2003).

Omanisation presents a number of key challenges to the tourism labour market. Firstly, the industry currently is dominated by foreign workers. Secondly, as well as the economic issues, the perception of the tourism sector may also be problematic from a cultural context and background. Thirdly, in addition to these challenges, issues about the appropriateness of working in the hotel industry from the Islamic perspective offer further dilemmas. It could be argued that tourism planning should be about planning for residents as well as for visitors. If tourism is to be a positive force in the lives of local residents, it is contingent upon local response, involvement and support (Liua and Wall, 2006). Therefore, a deep understanding of the labour market is essential in developing any future plans and setting goals of any organisation. At the present time, the variation of the workforce in the tourism and hotel industry in terms of workers’ nationalities, backgrounds, cultural differences and qualifications at all different levels, including
senior management position exacerbates the issue. The structure is mostly dominated by low-wage earners from nations including Bangladesh, Philippines, India, Indonesia, China and other East Asian countries. However, the contribution from Arab nationalities has recently grown in various locations, such as Arabian restaurants and bars.

This situation is not unique to the tourism sector; indeed it is widely experienced in other economic sectors such as oil as recent research demonstrates Valeri (2005:7):

*It is fifty per cent more expensive to have an Omani employee than an Indian one, at equal job and conditions of work; it’s not possible to replace exactly one Indian by one Omani. An Indian worker, you can ask him to stay two years night and day in the oil site in the desert for thirty-five Omani Rials (OMR) per month. An Omani one, it is not possible to constrain him to do the same because he has a family and he will ask to come back from Wednesday night to Saturday morning in Muscat and you have to pay him 120 OMR according to the law. So I prefer paying an Omani employee and ask him to stay at home, and keep the Indian guy working. And I talk only about an unskilled job.*

The statement above shows that the main concern of the manager is getting the job done. It also shows that non-Omani workers are more cost effective than Omani workers, as they are prepared to work unsociable shift patterns and can stay day and night and work during the weekends. Hence some managers hire Omanis in accordance with the Omanisation Plan implementation and pay them the specified rate; meanwhile the expatriate does the work, with no complaints, at a minimum cost (Valeri, 2005). Thus, companies may attempt to apply the labour laws by hiring Omanis, but at the same time they are aware of the cost-benefits to their companies by hiring non-Omanis to do the real work.
Whilst the potential significance of the industry cannot be underestimated, as evidenced by the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism in 2003, government plans are being developed in what is effectively a knowledge vacuum. Although there have been some studies of the implementation of Omanisation (e.g. Al-Lamki, 1998; Al-Lamki, 2000; Valeri, 2005) these have focused on other industries and other jobs such as teaching, medicine, nursing, and other government departments. Studies have also shown how Omanisation has also improved efficient in some jobs in the private sector, such as: all small sales and service shops in rural regions (e.g. shopkeepers or foodstuff managers) (Valeri, 2005). Arguably, these studies may not be applicable to the hotel industry because of its long working hours, night shifts, unlawful food and beverages provided in some hotels.

This research is particularly timely therefore because of the government’s plans for growth in the tourism industry and its concurrent Omanisation. Despite the significance of the hotel sector business to the Omani economy in general and to tourism specifically, little is known about the implementation of the Omanisation plan, and the major recruitment and retention challenges facing the hotel sector in Oman.

1.2 Contextualising the Research Project

The hotel sector represents a corner-stone of the tourism industry in the Sultanate of Oman, and the number of hotels and apartments in the Muscat region in particular has been growing consistently over the past decade. In line with the overall growth of tourism and the visitor accommodation sector in the Gulf, the Omani government has been keen to expand this sector as a means of economic diversification. However, the authorities chose oil, gas and industrial sectors as their priorities for economic
development and have only recently looked seriously at the hospitality sector as a sector with the potential for both employment and financial benefits (Mice, 2006).

Human resources (HR) are a critical element to exploit the potential of the hotel industry and there is a strong association between human resources, productivity and financial performance (Guest et al, 2003). In Oman, most of the employees in the hospitality industry are from nationalities other than local people. Even though the Government has openly declared a policy of preference towards companies that have positive Omanisation policies, hospitality employers are continuing to take on more and more expatriates rather than Omanis. As well as potential cost-savings, other reasons are believed to be due to cultural and linguistic issues. The Oman Economic Review (OER) press on Sustainable Growth and Economic Diversification for Oman reported: private sector expatriate employers have revealed a tendency, for linguistic or cultural reasons, to favour their own nationals over Omanis when hiring new workers (OER, 2003:1).

Thus, it may seem that as far as the means of international language communication used in the private sector is English, job opportunities will probably be targeted at other English-speaking nationalities that also represent cheaper labour sources. Consequently, companies might prefer for such cost benefits to recruit expatriates. From a cultural perspective, it is frequently seen in some companies that employers recruit expatriates from their own backgrounds more than those with local nationalities (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman, 2002). This causes another dilemma related to workplace discrimination. Accordingly it could be said that the preference for expatriate labour is due to different reasons such as cost, language skills and cultural issues.
Although the annual fees for the expatriate labour recruitment card have been raised from (70) to OMR (100) (Ministry of Manpower, 2003), the relaxation of the implementation of the regulations with regards to organising the recruitment process, resulted in a large flow of the expatriate labour and doubled its number. On the one hand, this illustrates the importance of integrating all policy measures together. On the other hand, it proves that as long as the increase in the cost of expatriate employees is less than the salary differential to the business owner for employing an Omani employee (in addition to the associated social insurance levy which is 10% of the salary), the business owner will continue to prefer expatriate workers (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

There are various factors which need to be considered as part of the Omanisation project, particularly human resources issues, like recruitment, training, development and promotion opportunities, but little is known about these. Many young Omanis may not have been given a job. Companies which feel that they are being pressured into Omanisation may too easily assign a role to a young Omani without preparing them for their development within the firm (OER, 2003). A need therefore exists to recruit and train graduates for job advancement in the hospitality industry to meet customer expectations as well as meet the demands of the Omanisation plan.

1.3 Research Journey

This section presents the motives that drive the development of this research and the research journey which has culminated in this thesis.

After graduating from the College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) with a bachelor degree in Home Economics, and as an outstanding student in a class of 22
Chapter One: Introduction and Research Problem

graduating from the same department, the college offered me a job as a demonstrator in the Home Economics department, a position equal to a university assistant lecturer in the United Kingdom. After that, the researcher took the decision to go to Egypt to pursue a Masters Degree in Enterprises and Home Management. After returning to Oman with a Masters degree, the researcher worked as a lecturer in the department and taught different courses, including: Family Resources Management; Consumer Guidance; Home Management: theory and practice.

The researcher always had a longstanding interest in travel from one place to another in Oman and outside the country, and had visited different countries, such as Holland, France, Belgium, United Kingdom, United States of America, India, Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

Just before coming to the UK to study for a Ph.D, in 2003 the researcher was on a committee with the Ministry of Manpower, called the "Sanad Manpower Employment Project" (SMEP). The researcher was selected to represent Sultan Qaboos University on this committee. SMEP aims to Omanise different jobs and encourage Omanis to engage in more diverse career opportunities than has traditionally been the case. The project was divided into different committees and each committee aimed to Omanise different job work areas, the researcher was on the committee that aimed to Omanise the female tailoring businesses.

During the time of interviewing young Omani females, the members of the committee stayed in luxury hotels in different regions of the Sultanate of Oman, the researcher noticed that most of the employees working in these hotels were from other nationalities.
rather than from Oman. Most of them were from countries like India, Pakistan, Philippines, and other nationalities from Asia or the Far East. This raised several questions; on one hand we were working on a project that aims to Omanise many employment sectors, and yet the observation was that the majority of the employees in the hotels were non-Omanis. Many questions came to mind at that time such as: why is the number of expatriate employees much higher when compared to the number of employed citizens? Why are Omanis who work in the hotels given low-class positions, such as porters or doormen or on switchboards? Why do Omani women not work in hotels that are located in more rural areas?

Such questions kept circulating in researcher’s mind and tried to find out some convincing answers to them without consulting anyone at that time.

Although SQU opted for tourism and hospitality as the subject area for the PhD topic, the researcher had some latitude in developing the subject area and thus, when the researcher came to the UK to do the PhD in the Welsh School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management (now part of Cardiff School of Management), the original purpose was to study women working in the tourism industry in Oman. Suddenly, two things happened, one of which was a visit by the SQU delegation including the Dean of the College of Art and Social Science and the Head of Tourism Department who arrived in Cardiff in late April 2005. The researcher was asked to present the study proposal to the delegation and then was asked to change the topic of research, because the focus on gender was not felt to be an issue in this research from delegation perspective. Secondly, meeting a male student from Oman doing his Masters degree in Hospitality Management was another reason. The conversation with the student was about our study. He said “none of my family or my friends wants me to do the study about the
hospitality industry, because they all think that working in a hotel is an unacceptable job in the Omani society, and the income from such kind of a job is unacceptable from an Islamic religion point of view”. He explained this as a result of “the unlawful beverages provided in the hotels and because of all the money hotels make comes from unlawful resources”.

When the time came to finish the research proposal, the discussion between the researcher and the student came to mind. At the same time the researcher remembered working with SMEP and the issues noticed during that period. The importance of this issue for the industry and Omani employment seemed worthy of detailed consideration and it fulfilled the researcher interest, particularly because the researcher considered the issues would be even more relevant for women and thus could combine the interest in gender with issues which were of specific concern to the Omani government.

The researcher felt that there was a necessity to talk to people in Oman in order to understand their perception of jobs in the hotel sector and investigate why such jobs are so poorly perceived. Also, researcher wanted to discover what factors influence people’s perceptions of the hotel industry. The results of this research would aid in understanding how the goal of tourism and hospitality contributes to GDP and if Omanisation of the hotel industry can be achieved.
1.4 Research Questions

As a result of the discussion that resulted in this study, to understand the reasons behind the lack of local representation in the hotel sector in Oman and the high numbers of non-Omanis working in the hospitality industry, several key questions needed to be addressed in my research;

1) How is the Omanisation Plan being applied to the hotel sector specifically?

2) What are the human resources issues that Omani hotel employers face and how are they addressing these issues?

3) What are the constraints and barriers that impact upon the recruitment of Omanis to the hotel sector?

4) How are these issues addressed by the Omanisation Plan?

To address the above questions, a case study (Yin, 2003) is being developed about the Omanisation Plan and its implementation in the hotel sector against the perceptions of Omani society to hospitality careers.

1.5 Primary Aim and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to explore the issues relating to hotel employment which affects the feasibility of implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

To achieve this aim, the study focuses on the following five specific objectives:

- Objective One

To make a contribution to an under-researched area by reviewing the literature on the tourism and hospitality industry and the issues related to employment in the hotel
industry, as well as highlighting the socio-cultural dimensions in terms of how religions, notably Islam, and societies, particularly Omani society influence individuals' behaviours which impact on their choice of career.

- **Objective Two**
To explore and establish the context of the Sultanate of Oman, and to review the current profile of Omani tourism, as well as to review the Omanisation Plan of the hotel sector.

- **Objective Three**
To explore the human resource issues faced by Omani hotel employers, and the socio-cultural factors and Islamic doctrine that hinder Omanis from working in the hotel industry in order to illustrate barriers to hospitality employment, and the paradoxical link between selection of tourism as a vehicle for diversification of the Omani economy in the context of the Omanisation Plan.

- **Objective Four**
To provide recommendations for key stakeholders to help address the issues relating to hotel employment and Omanisation of the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

1.6 Thesis Structure
Figure 1.2 illustrates the structure of the thesis. Chapter One begins with a brief introduction to the factors influencing the diversification of the Omani economy, the government's Omanisation strategy, and the economic impact of tourism in Oman. This chapter then contextualises the research problem, my research journey before concluding with the key research objectives.
Chapter Two reviews the key literature on human resources, starting with the development of human resource management from personnel management. The chapter moves on to human resources in the hospitality industry, and hospitality career-related issues. The chapter also talks about the shift of demanded skills in the service industry where employers desire employees with skills such as aesthetic labour and emotional labour, and how these skills affect the worker identity. It concludes with the influence of religion on people lives and how it shapes their lives and behaviours. It also shed lights on how Islam as a religion governs every aspects of Muslims life.

Chapter Three consists of seventeen sections; it begins with an outline of the chapter, followed by information about Oman, its geographical location, climate and topography, population, religion and language, as well as it talks about Omani society and its people. The chapter then provides information about the country after 1970 when His Majesty the Sultan Qaboos came to power, the Omani economy and the country plan of its economy with a key focus on two areas: economic diversification, and the Omanisation Plan. It also gives information about the emergence of tourism as a plan for a diversified economy, and tourism development in the Sultanate as well as highlighting employment in the public and private sectors.

The chapter further gives details about the Omanisation plan as a key focus of Oman Vision 2020 in general, and the plan for the tourism and hotel sector specifically. The chapter also provides data about the number of Omanis in the tourism and hotel industries versus expatriate numbers. It also highlights the importance of human resources in the hotel industry in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to the country’s effort in training and developing human resources for the industry.
Chapter Four describes the epistemological and theoretical perspectives which underpin the research and provides a justification for choosing the research design and methodology. The chapter then describes the methodological approach which was taken towards the research. It gives details about the different methods used to collect data to achieve the aim of the research in three stages, the first stage used document analysis from different ministries to achieve objective two, then stage two used semi-structured interviews to achieve objective three, and the final stage used semi-structured interviews to achieve objective four. It concludes with a description of how data was transcribed and analysed.

Chapter Five discusses the findings of the field-work related to recruitment in the hotel industry in the Sultanate of Oman. It illustrates the key issues from different perspectives; government officials, hotel employees and hotel employers. The chapter classifies the main constraints and barriers facing Omanisation Plan in the hotel industry: the first category explores the employment issues in the Omani hotel industry. The second category identifies the education and training issues facing the hotel industry. Finally, the chapter discuss the cultural and social issues hindering the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the sector.

Chapter Six provides conclusion of research findings and the responsibility of different stakeholder towards these issues. The chapter also provide recommendations for different stakeholders to resolve the issues with regard to human resources in the hotel industry, in line with the objectives of the Omanisation Plan for the hotel sector. It also provides recommendations to improve the image of the hotel industry through utilising the media and other resources in Omani society.
Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by giving final overviews of the thesis. It also reviews the objectives and the extent to which the aim and objectives of the research have been achieved. It considers the overall contribution of the thesis to tourism theory and practice. The chapter also discusses the limitation of the research and the opportunities for further research in this area.
Figure 1.2: Thesis Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1: Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1-Research problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3-Research aim and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Thesis structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2: Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Objective 1: To make a contribution to understanding of the challenges of diversifying the Omani economy through a focus on tourism development through a critical review of literature on tourism and hospitality and the issues related to employment in the industry, as well as reviewing the socio-cultural dimensions and the Islamic perspective of working in hotels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3: Contextualising on the Sultanate of Oman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Objective 2: To explore and establish the context of the Sultanate of Oman, and to review the current profile of Omani tourism, as well as to review the Omanisation Plan of the hotel sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4: Research approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Qualitative approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Case Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5: Results and discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Objective 3: To explore the human resource issues faced by Omani hotel employers, and the socio-cultural factors and Islamic doctrine that hinder Omanis from working in the hotel industry in order to illustrate barriers to hospitality employment, and the paradoxical link between selection of tourism as a vehicle for diversification of the Omani economy in the context of the Omanisation Plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Objective 4: To provide recommendations for key stakeholders to help address the issues relating hotel employment the Sultanate of Oman.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7: Final Overviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reviews the objectives and the extent to which the aim and objectives of the research have been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Covers the contribution of the thesis to theory and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Covers limitation of the research and the opportunities for further research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 37
2.2 Human Resource Management .................................................................................................................. 38
2.3 Hospitality Sector ....................................................................................................................................... 41
  2.3.1 Defining the Hospitality Sector ........................................................................................................ 41
  2.3.2 Importance and the Growth of the Industry ....................................................................................... 42
2.4 Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry .......................................................................................... 44
  2.4.1 Career Paths in the Hospitality Industry ........................................................................................ 45
2.5 Skills Shortage ............................................................................................................................................ 49
2.6 Labour Market ........................................................................................................................................... 52
2.7 Expatriate Employment .............................................................................................................................. 57
2.8 Hospitality Industry Issues ....................................................................................................................... 62
  2.8.1 Employment Issues ............................................................................................................................ 64
    2.8.1.1 Recruitment and Selection ........................................................................................................... 64
    2.8.1.2 Aesthetic Labour ........................................................................................................................ 70
    2.8.1.3 Emotional Labour ....................................................................................................................... 73
    2.8.1.4 Worker Identity .......................................................................................................................... 78
    2.8.1.5 Labour Turnover and Staff Retention ......................................................................................... 79
    2.8.1.6 Job Continuity and Security ....................................................................................................... 83
    2.8.1.7 Remuneration and Working Conditions ..................................................................................... 85
      a) Remuneration .................................................................................................................................. 85
      b) Working Conditions ........................................................................................................................ 85
  2.8.2 Education and Training Issues ............................................................................................................. 88
    2.8.2.1 Education, Training and Development ...................................................................................... 88
      a) Cost of Training ............................................................................................................................... 93
      b) Type and Level of Training ............................................................................................................ 95
  2.8.3 Cultural and Social Issues .................................................................................................................... 96
    2.8.3.1 Social Attitudes ........................................................................................................................ 96
    2.8.3.2 Family Influence on Career Constructs ...................................................................................... 99
2.9 Religion and Society ................................................................................................................................. 104
  2.9.1 Muslim Perspectives of Working in the Hotel Industry ..................................................................... 108
  2.9.2 Muslim Women in the Hotel Industry .............................................................................................. 111
2.10 Image of Hospitality Careers ................................................................................................................ 114
2.11 Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 117
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on human resources as a crucial factor in the hospitality industry because of the nature and characteristics of the industry. The chapter also highlights the historical development of human resource management, and the importance of managing and developing human resources in the hospitality industry.

The chapter discusses the issue of skills shortages and how employers address this issue from internal and external labour markets, and the use of expatriate employees’ to fill the skills gaps and skills shortages. It also focuses on the hospitality industry and the issues related to recruitment in the industry, as well as the issues facing the industry globally, including employment issues, education and training issues, and social and cultural issues. The chapter also debates the service and servility constructs in the industry as one of the major constraints hindering the development of careers in hospitality.

The chapter further sheds light on the extent of the influence of religion and society on individuals’ behaviour and how it shapes their lives. The Islamic perspective is another critical issue in relation to developing the hospitality industry in Muslim societies. The chapter then discusses Muslim perspective on working in the hotel industry and the constraints on developing careers in the industry in Oman.
2.2 Human Resource Management

Human resource management (HRM) is not a new concept but new terminology as this area was called personnel management (PM) in the early days. HRM’s roots can be tracked to the Industrial Revolution in England in the late 18th century (Schuler, 1998). In the mid-nineteenth century there were significant interventions led by high-profile social reformers, such as Lord (Stredwick, 2000). Shaftesbury and Owen became concerned at the exploitation of the factory workers, where the emphasis had been strongly on discipline, cost, and the employees’ health, welfare and their personal living standards. Personnel managers believed that working conditions were important and that if employees were treated fairly and humanely, their productivity would increase and they would work better (Stredwick, 2000). However, PM was more obvious after the Second World War (1939-45), when the demand for labour and personnel specialists increased (Schuler, 1998).

Therefore in 1946, professionals working in people management established the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) which was concerned with PM (Schuler, 1998). During this period, specialists refocused attention on the importance of improving selection procedures for people doing more complex jobs, e.g. fighter pilots and secret service agents (Schuler, 1998).

In the 1970s, the term “HRM” replaced the older term PM reflecting a broader perspective, which included issues such as safety and health, stress, employee satisfaction, and industrial relations. HRM acknowledges the importance of employees as corporate assets on the basis that their skills and knowledge, and the experiences of employees have economic value to an organisation because they enable the organisation
to be more productive and adaptable. Like other assets, employees have a high value in the marketplace, but unlike assets they have a potential value that can be realised only with their cooperation (Schuler, 1998).

*The increasing emphasis on effective employee relations, and the importance of securing the involvement of staff and their commitment to the aims of the organisation, has led to the increasing use of ‘human resources’ to replace ‘Personnel’*

(Mullins, 1995:172).

According to Wood (1997), HRM is not a synonym for PM; it is on an intellectually different level to PM in a number of important ways. In many such conceptions HRM can be said to include PM as a set of practices, which relies on two more organisationally-strategic concepts, namely:

- The idea that employees are the major resource in the organisation, capable and willing to be developed;
- The concept that the HRM is crucial to strategic direction and not a ‘servicing’ function.

Cuming (1989 cited in Mullins, 1995) agreed that HRM was a new term for what most good personnel managers had already been practicing. The extent to which PM has moved into another historical phase of HRM is debatable. According to Mullins (1995), there is no clear distinction between PM and HRM. However, Guest *et al.* (2003) suggests three ways in which HRM has been distinguished from traditional PM:

- through its renaming as PM to capture the new fashion;
- by re-organise and re-conceptualise the personnel roles and functions of personnel departments; and
- in offering a new approach for management.
But what is essential and important is not the title but the main role of either PM or HRM, which is, according to William (1989 cited in Mullins, 1995:172), concerned with:

*mechanisms through which the organisation attracts candidates for employment, selects them, introduces them to the organisation's structure and culture, motives them to perform a given set of tasks, pay them for this and seeks to identify their potential for future development. It is then concerned with systems of promotions, manpower and succession planning, and coping with the labour turnover of one form or another.*

Bratton and Gold (2003) and Legge (2005) suggested that HRM can focus on ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ versions of HRM. The ‘hard’ version emphasises the term ‘resource’ and adopts a ‘rational’ approach to managing employees, which views employees as another economic factor, as a cost that has to be controlled. In contrast, the ‘soft’ version emphasises the ‘human’ element and focuses on training and development of employees to ensure that highly-skilled and loyal employees give the organisation a competitive advantage.

Nickson (2007) argued that whilst understanding of debate about soft and hard and best fit and best practice are important to place HR practices within a broader theoretical context, in reality, regardless of these ideal types all organisations have to manage their employees on a day-to-day basis. This management in any organisation can be done through certain main responsibilities which can be summarised in a three-part cycle as noted in Figure 2.1.
Human resource managers in any organisation work through effective HRM to face a large number of problems in their organisation, ranging from a constantly-changing workforce to coping with ever-present government legislation. HRM has six functional areas: human resource planning, recruitment, and selection; human resource development; compensation and benefits; safety and health; employee and labour relations; human resource research (Mondy and Noe III, 1993).

2.3 Hospitality Sector

2.3.1 Defining the Hospitality Sector

Hospitality as a word has its roots from the Latin word *hospes* meaning both guest and host, its core has to do the nature of exchange between the two. It is also related to the sharing of the relationship, spaces and resources for the benefit of the other (Holt, 2002). According to Holt (2002) it stands in contrast to another Latin word, *hostis* meaning enemy or stranger. "Offering hospitality was considered a part of one's...
humanity, essential in most religious frameworks as an expression of the human spirit in community” (Holt, 2002:4).

Hospitality means friendly reception, generous treatment of guests or strangers. It is neither obligation nor duty and true hospitality is a spiritual practice, a religious practice. According to Khan (2008) the world's great religious traditions have long affirmed the link between religion and hospitality. For example, both Hebrew and Christian scriptures admonish their people to welcome guests. Hospitality in Hinduism is fundamental to Hindu culture and providing food and shelter to a needy stranger was and is a traditional duty of the householder. In Judaism, showing hospitality to guests is considered as an obligation. In Islam, also the true Islamic civility with regards to hospitality is to serve the guests with cheerfulness. The Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) said that hospitality was a symptom of faith.

The hospitality industry comprises separate and distinct sectors; it can be taken to include a wide variety of organisations encompassing areas like hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast, farm houses, holiday parks, restaurants, pubs and cafes, airlines, cruise ships, travel agencies, and tour companies (Nickson, 2007). Economists in the hospitality industry frequently point to the heterogeneous nature of the industry as it comprises units ranging from the most humble café to the largest luxury hotel owned by a multi-national corporation (Wood, 1997).

2.3.2 Importance and the Growth of the Industry
"Tourism, of which the hotel and catering industry is a principal element, is now claimed to be the world’s fastest growing industry and also one of the leading earners of foreign currency" (Boella, 2000:1) but even though the hospitality industry, from a product point of view, has seen vast growth, and technical improvement and conditions
in the industry may have improved over what they were in the past, the relative position of the industry as an employer, compared with other employers in other sectors, has not yet improved (Boella, 2000).

Hospitality businesses continue to provide rich ground for both entry-level employment and long-term careers. At present, nearly one in every twelve workers in the United States works in the hospitality and tourism and employment growth is predicted well into the future (Sciarini et al., 1997). In the UK, Baum (2002) asserts that 10% of the global workforce is employed in tourism and hospitality–related work. The hospitality industry alone employs 1 in every 10 people in the UK, which is over 2.5 million people working in more than 30,000 establishments. Also, 1 in every 5 new jobs in the UK falls into this sector with another 400,000 new jobs created in 2006 according to The British Hospitality Association (BHA, 2007). Therefore human resources are an important element shaping this sector.

Hospitality work (and thus the skills that it demands) presents diversity in both horizontal and vertical terms. In the horizontal sense, it reflects the very wide range of jobs with different skills requirements and working conditions. This wide range of jobs makes entry into the labour market easy for workers from other sectors of the economy (Szivas, et al. 2003). Vertical diversity is reflected in the range of technical, service and managerial tasks that are undertaken 'under the one roof' (Baum, 2002).

The human element plays a major part in the overall success of any organisation, especially in a service industry such as hospitality. In this industry, many members of the workforce are in direct contact with customers and are seen as being involved in achieving the objectives of the organisation. The quality of the service provided not
only depends upon the skills of the employee but also depends on employee attitudes (Mullins, 1995). Poon (1993 cited in Baum 2002:348) noted the employee in hospitality “must be trained to be loyal, flexible, tolerant, amiable and responsible...at every successful tourism establishment, it is the employees that stand out...technology cannot substitute for welcoming employees”. However, the hospitality industry has the lowest labour costs in terms of wages and training and employee’s development. For instance, in Australia, the sector spends the least amount of money on the training and development of staff, and has one of the highest proportions of unskilled employees born overseas who work with little opportunity for advancement (Holt, 2002).

2.4 Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry

HRM is a vital component in any organisation as a result of the high levels of competition between organisations. In addition, the emergence of many nations with low wages and highly skilled workers, and the changing values and educational standards are other reasons for managing human resources. Rapid technological advances, dynamic legal, political and social realities and the demand for high quality products and services at low prices all call for HRM policies for managing human resources (Schuler, 1998).

“The hospitality as a service industry needs to court and satisfy its public in order to ensure continuing profits” (Broome, 1997:168), and this cannot be achieved without giving much consideration to the human resource capital.

There are many opportunities for employment in hotel and catering which exist in both the back- and front-of-house. Back-of-house consists of those who are not directly involved with customers (for example chefs, kitchen assistants, kitchen porters, auditors
and controllers). Front-of-house staff, such as receptionists, waiting staff, reservation clerks, porters and department managers, many of whom are uniformed, are the first to have contact with guests and so must give a good impression (Joseph, 2000).

This is because the nature of demand in the sector has changed. Increasingly, service providers are faced with better-educated, well-travelled and altogether more sophisticated consumers. This translates into higher customer expectations, and hospitality organisations must ensure they provide a service which satisfies this new consumer dynamic and meet their needs (Lee-Ross, 1999).

Therefore, managing the human resources in any organisation will help to hire the right person for the right job, lessen high employee turnover, enhance employee performance, help the company/organisation to avoid discriminatory actions and ensure fair treatment of their employees in their payment, training, labour practices or career development (Dessler, 2000). This in turn will make the hospitality industry a more attractive industry to draw more graduates to work in, and to encourage them to make the hospitality career a life career.

2.4.1 Career Paths in the Hospitality Industry

According to Wood (1997), graduates desire a career offering a sense of achievement, job security, promotion prospects and the opportunity to earn a high salary. However, jobs in hospitality were rated as having a lower status than jobs requiring equivalent skills and qualifications in some other industries although students with work experience in hospitality rated it more highly than those that did not (Wood, 1997). Whilst a career has been identified from different perspectives, e.g. economic, political
science, historical, and geographical perspectives (Haven, 2002), it can also simply be identified as the evolving sequence of person's work experience over time (Arthur et al, 1998:8).

Individuals move through focus distinct career stages during the course of their lives (Super, 1957), these stages are commonly referred to as stages one, two, three and four. The first stage-establishment occurs at the onset of the career. The second stage is advancement when the individual moves from job to job, both inside and outside the organisation. The third stage of maintenance occurs when individuals have reached the limits of advancement and concentrate on the job they are doing. The final stage is when the individual goes through withdrawal as they approach retirement (Super, 1957).

Careers in the tourism industry are relatively new phenomena and have not been the subject of extensive research (Ayres, 2006a). According to Mayo (1997) hospitality careers present the most energizing, inspiring and challenging options and opportunities today. Hospitality careers are considered "hot" careers in this century for reasons such as technology, intense competition, shrinking world borders, economic growth, and increased levels of guest expectations. On the contrary, Ayres (2006b) argued that, although there have been plenty of job opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry, the concept of developing tourism and hospitality jobs into careers is a relatively new trend.

Baum (1995) and the ILO (2001) also assert that the tourism sector provides many opportunities for well-qualified people aiming at international careers (Hjalager, 2003). Career opportunities are claimed to be more accessible in tourism than in many other
sectors of the economy due to both the nature of the business and the strong international relationship of tourism enterprises.

Career development refers to the career outcomes for both the individuals and the organisations, and encompasses important issues, such as economics, job transitions, mobility, career withdrawal, career compromise and career stages (Ladkin, 2000). Yet, it is clear from the little research that is available that high levels of mobility and unclear career paths stigmatise tourism careers (Ayres, 2006a). The issue about hospitality careers is that individuals see hospitality as a job, but not necessarily a life time career. Mike (1998:18) asserted that “many probably think, nice after school job, but hardly a serious career choice”.

Choice, according to Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001:1), is a “fundamental process of human existence, for in daily life and in the course of people lifetimes the way in which they exist as people is founded on the choices they make for themselves and also on those made by others”.

Many different factors and forces can influence and shape career choice; some people choose their career according to income, regardless of what they can do best. Young people choosing career paths are often driven by financial considerations rather than what they can do best (Shiller, 2003).

Choice is also not a singular idea which is either present or not. Rather, it occurs and is associated with a wide range of circumstances. The choice of career fundamentally depends on the education level or education choice. At one extreme, individuals may find themselves in a circumstance where they have no choice or almost no choice. In terms of education choice in UK, for most parents where the fixed school catchments
often the traditional ideas of educational choice, these schools (other than parents who could choose private education) are their only choice for their children. At the other extreme, some individuals can be faced with circumstances where there is a confusing range of choices. At 18, individuals may choose to continue their higher education, or to pursue a job with some training. In this case, the choice of jobs and careers is potentially very large, and the choice of higher education is enormous (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001).

The choice of career route is determined by educational trajectories which are determined by three factors. The first factor is the personal individual preferences and aspirations of high school students. Family influence is the second factor shaping individual choices; whilst the final factor, choice can be shaped by the signals used by educational institutions (Foskett and Hesketh, 1996).

Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (1997) point out that the capacity and willingness of individuals to make economically rational, informed choices about careers is context-related and believe that it is difficult to be separated from the social and cultural background of young individuals as well as their life experiences (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 1998).

A wide range of factors are associated with the process of career choice, starting from the transition points within education and training pathway-entry to primary school and secondary school, and choices about entering further education. At each stage, the impact of earlier can be choices barriers to the options available and other constraints, shape the choices that young people can make as he/she moves from education or training into the labour market as the first formal step in their economic working life or
career (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). Therefore, a holistic understanding of these factors is important.

Thus, it could be said that choosing a career in the hospitality industry is a complex issue. Understanding the choice process in relation to a hospitality careers, and the issues affecting the career choice of individuals is essential, taking into account their cultural background, family demographics, individual motivations, and educational background is an important aspect for workforce planning in any country. It is also important to note that, whilst the industry required skilled employees to fill job vacancies, it does not provide the best environment for its employee to develop their jobs into a life career. It has also been mentioned earlier that graduates in choosing their jobs always looking for job security, sense of achievement promotion prospects and the opportunity to earn a high salary with high career advancement, however, the hospitality industry environment is not providing them with what they desire. Consequently, we can say that the industry is suffering from skill shortages because employers recruit casual labour, unqualified employees, and high school leavers.

2.5 Skills Shortage
The terms 'skill shortage', 'labour shortage', and 'hard to fill vacancy' are often used as if they were synonymous (Nicaise and Vos, 2001). However, this is not the case as skill shortage refers to “lack of adequately skilled individuals in the accessible labour market” (Haven et al, 2004:158). Experiencing a skill shortage means that employers are not able to find the particular skill they require anywhere in the market place despite offering competitive conditions/ salaries (ICE, 2001).
Meanwhile labour shortages appear when the number of available workers falls short of the corresponding number of vacancies within a given segment (e.g. sub-region and/or occupation) of the labour market (Nicaise and Vos, 2001). But the term hard to fill vacancies can be seen as the early symptoms of labour shortage (Nicaise and Vos, 2001). The term skills are used not only because of the lack of availability of other designations, but also because, with respect to wages and employment conditions, it suits managers and owners to have a large proportion of their workforce classified as unskilled (Burns, 1997).

There are a range of studies that have pointed out the important contribution that human resource skills can make to productivity, employment and economic performance. Baum (2002) argued that the nature and relative level of skills in the sector are determined by the social, economic, political and technological context within which they operate. Baum (2002) also asserts that in most developing countries there is no shortage of labour but the skill base that exists in the economy may not be tuned to effective tourism work. In developed countries, skill shortages exist as result of the image problems that the sector has, demand factors such as seasonality and changes in the technical focus of education and training programmes within the institution system.

It could also be said that blaming tertiary institutions for the skills shortage in the hospitality industry is easy, but the problem is deeper, and the industry itself is partly responsible for that. According to Moyle (2008), in the life-cycle of a hospitality career there are critical steps from the point of entry to the point of exit, and skills are a factor at key stages. These stages can be defined in terms of: attraction to the industry,
education, recruiting process, progression within the industry along with on-going training and skills development, and exit from the industry (Moyle, 2008).

Lu (1999) blamed the educational programmes in the hospitality industry for the skills shortage and comments that the emphasis in many hospitality education programmes has not changed significantly for years – teaching students the basic skills needed to perform specialised job functions, supplementing coursework with some work experience for a taste of the ‘real world’ and then graduating. However, most four-year hospitality management programmes simply have not kept up with the dramatic change of the world or pace with the technology revolution in the industry (Lu, 1999). As a result, hospitality work is widely characterised in both the popular press and in research-based academic sources as being dominated by a low skills profile (Wood, 1997). In contrast, Keep and Mayhew (1999 cited in Lashley, 2005) claimed that, with the possible exception of chefs, there are no serious skill shortages in the hospitality industry. They argued that the causes of recruitment difficulties within the sector are not the result of skills shortages, but it could be a reflection of the sector’s reputation for offering relatively poor employment conditions and low pay.

Amoah and Baum (1997) recommended that it is necessary not only to seek to increase employment, but also to extend the range of educational categories and increase the level of tourism instruction; which therefore will improve the overall skills base and enhance the image of tourism and hospitality industry. Jones and Haven (2005) asserted that skills shortages encourage employers to recruit people without the necessary level of qualifications and to train post-recruitment
Since the world of work is changing in terms of rapidly expanding emerging economies, an increasingly global labour market and new technology, all of these factors have significant impact on the demand for and supply of skills, organisational structures and practices, and the prospects for employment, inequality, productivity and growth (Vaitilingam, 2006). Therefore, an understanding of internal and external labour markets by employers and decision makers in the hospitality industry is important to help make appropriate decisions with regards to recruitment and selections. This will assist human resource managers in recruiting their employees internally or externally.

2.6 Labour Market

In any organisation or firm, the strategies and practices of recruitment and selection are affected by both the external and internal environment. The major sources of external influence are economic, legal, political, socio-cultural and technological. Whereas internal influences include the organisation’s stage of internationalisation, its culture and structure, and its attitude to external and internal labour market (Lucas et al., 2006). Therefore, it is important for HR practitioners to understand and monitor the state of the labour market. But what do we mean when we talk about labour market? Employers offer jobs or work. Employees offer skills. Together they work for each other’s benefit. Along with economic conditions and other factors, they make up the labour market.

According to Abowd and Kramarz (1997) the external labour market (ELM) represents the heterogeneous of employment opportunities that might be available in the labour market as an alternative to any particular person’s current job. The internal labour market (ILM) represents a heterogeneous collection of compensation and HRM policies that describe the career possibilities for an individual who remains with the same firm.
and does not change employers. Thus, it can be said that, whilst the main focus of ELM is the movement of employees between organisations (Fee et al., 2006), ILM focuses on the movement of employees within an organisation (Jago and Deery, 2004).

Labour markets around the world vary in their characteristics in terms of size, age profile, skill set, gender and ethnic breakdown. They are associated to country’s level of economic, social and educational policies, and general educational and vocational system (Lucas et al., 2006).

Labour markets in the industrialised countries have been undergoing profound changes. The change which has attracted most attention is the increase in the share of skilled workers in the total volume of employment and in wage bills. Similarly, deterioration in the employment and pay prospects of less skilled workers is also another striking change (Katz and Author, 1999 cited in Caroli, 2007).

According to Nickson (2007) understanding macro-economic issues, political and social factors and their impact on the external and internal labour markets, will change and affect the work of HR practitioners directly and visibly, in terms of issues like employee/ industrial relations, recruitment, training and development and pay.

The human resources that contribute to a country’s economy are bought and sold in the labour market. The greater the quantity or quality of human resources supplied to the market the higher the potential level of economy. The potential contribution of human resources to a country’s economy can be only be realised if there is a sufficient demand for these resources, which is itself derived from the demand for goods and services (CIPD, 2008).
The single biggest influence of the nature of labour market in the tourism and hospitality industry is the recognition that there are often wide fluctuations in short-term demand for the product, which has major and noticeable implications for the staffing of an organisation. The fact that the industry is labour intensive is allied to this unpredictable demand, which means the labour costs are high in the total costs of tourism and hospitality businesses. Consequently, many employers have tried to minimise labour costs (Nickson, 2007). To minimise labour costs, employers recruit with what Wood calls ‘marginal workers’; such as; women, young people, students, migrant workers and ethnic minorities (Nickson, 2007).

ILM is “where workers are hired into entry level jobs and higher levels are filled within. Wages are determined internally and may be quite free of market pressure” (Lazear and Oyer, 2004:527). Meanwhile ELMs “imply that workers move somewhat fluidly between firms and wages are determined by some aggregate process where firms do not have significant discretion over wages setting” (Lazear and Oyer, 2004:527). The two markets are linked together mainly at entry-level jobs (Lam, 1992).

A company’s approach to internal and external labour markets is a very important consideration. Organisations that rely heavily on an internal labour market which is enhanced through training and development will have a very different approach to recruitment and selection from one which chooses to fill its position vacancies from external labour market (Lucas et al., 2006). Many tourism and hospitality organisations, according to Nickson (2007), have failed to develop strong ILMs, where skills are developed maximally via internal promotion and upgrading, instead managers have relied on the ELM where labour is plentiful and cheaper.
Lazear and Oyer (2004) discussed whether positions are filled from outside the firm or whether to be filled by incumbents, except at the firm’s ports-of-entry. They noted that even in the European environment where wage and employment determination are controlled by institutional factors, the ELM is prevalent and forceful. They also added that although promotions from within is the rule at most higher level positions in most firms, positions are often filled from outside the firm, and the wages paid are those determined by the general market conditions, not by the firm.

Grimshaw et al (2001) suggests that the ideal-type of labour model of the ILM is when a stable employment relationship between the employer and employee is built to conditions of skills specificity, on-the-job-training and custom in the workplace. The employee benefits from this relationship when the permanency of employment offsets the wage sacrifice made during the initial period of training in an internal labour market. This offsets of the wages provide a basis for future promotion within the organisation. The benefit to the employer can be by hiring staff onto permanent rather than temporary contracts as an efficient strategy which ensures they benefits from the increased productivity of the fully trained employee (Grimshaw et al., 2001).

ILM has been used by labour market theorists as the basis of labour market analysis. The key elements of an ILM are training, promotional opportunity, job security, pay and custom (Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981). Caroli (2007) asserts that firms have to decide between two different strategies in recruiting their employees. First strategy based on external flexibility, in which lower skilled workers are dismissed and replaces by workers with better formal qualification, and the second based on internal flexibility, in which workers already in post are trained to meet the demand of new production
methods. Caroli (2007) also adds that by using the first strategy, the turnover rate will be high, while with the second strategy which is based on internal labour market, turnover will be low. This shows that the presence or absence of an ILM has an important and effective impact on the stability of an organisation's workforce.

Torrington *et al* (2008) associate ELM with employee development. They pointed out that if skilled individuals are plentiful in the ELM, management has the choice whether, and to what extent, it wishes to develop staff internally. In the case of skilled individuals in short supply, internal development becomes a priority. They commented that ELM has a big impact on employee development strategy, so it is important to have an effective integration between HR development strategy, other aspects of human resource strategy and overall organisational strategy. Caroli (2007) also emphasises that training cost with internal flexibility may be higher than recruitment costs associated with external flexibility.

Wages in any firms are influenced by the labour market in terms of unemployment rates (occupational and overall). This is so because the demand for labour is a derived demand that is dependant on the demand for the products and services produced by labour. Lazear and Oyer (2004) referred to data from Sweden from the late 1980s, where they found that although there is significant evidence of internal promotion being important, a significant external market exists that affects both wage setting and hiring patterns. They concluded that although promotion from within is the rule at most higher level positions in most firms, positions are often filled from outside the firm, and the wages paid are those determined by the general market conditions, not by the firm. They also asserted that if all markets are ELM, then all wages should move together once job
and skills have been sufficiently well defined. Thus any change in the market wage should be reflected in a parallel change in worker’s wage at any firm.

According to Bratton and Gold (2003) managers may typically be heard saying that pay levels are based on the market. Understanding markets requires an analysis for supply and demand of labour. "The supply of human resources focuses on many factors, including the wage rate for that particular occupation, its status, employees’ qualifications and the preferences of people regarding paid work and leisure" (Bratton and Gold, 2003:304).

Lazear and Oyer (2004) assert that any attempt to exploit a worker by forcing him to accept a wage below the market wage would result in turnover. Hassink and Russo (2003) in their 1997-1998 research based on Dutch employee-employers found that workers who moved internally are in the higher segments of the wage distribution, relative to externally-hired workers. They also noted that the difference in wage narrows slightly when the worker with internal mobility related to the hirees who were previously employed with another firm (job-to-job movement). Therefore, labour markets are perceived to influence the employment system in any firm. Without sufficient information on labour market, it is difficult to establish and adopt appropriate employment system (Torbjörn, 2005).

2.7 Expatriate Employment

Although the hospitality industry has experienced steady growth throughout the 1990s, the need for talented professionals to fill the gaps that result from this growth has never been greater (Kretz and Partlow, 2001).
In today's global workplace, with the urgent need to address skill shortages on the political agendas of many countries around the world, many workers choose to leave their country of origin in search of new opportunities in other countries (Neault, 2007). "Throughout time economic migration has meant that people have been willing to move to find work or better paying jobs" (Nickson, 2007:72).

Employment of expatriates is one of the recruitment issues in the world-wide hotel industry. Nickson (2007) noted that multinational companies (MNCs) face choices in how they staff their overseas units, including the use of expatriate managers, and how the use of such managers is commonplace in the tourism and hospitality industry. Barber and Pittway (2000:2) define expatriate as any "individual who works outside their country of birth but not immigrate to the country where they work".

To overcome the labour shortage issue, many countries started to recruit expatriates with the required qualifications and with minimum cost. On one hand, recruiting expatriates might resolve the problem temporarily, but on the other hand, this issue might have different dimensions for these countries such as; political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and ecological dimensions (Zhao and Merna, 1993). According to Barber and Pittway (2000) political dimensions can be identified as: national stability; government development agenda; visa availability; international political bodies.

From the economic dimension, the impact of expatriate workers on a nation's economy can be clear in the outflow of compensation paid to employees (COE) from the domestic source to his or her country of origin. In other words, in the case of the local
employee, the salaries and wages remain within the country, but this is not the case with expatriates as the salaries and wages take different paths.

This issue is disputable, although the expatriates’ income in the host country outflows to their country of origin, it could have a positive impact on the economy as well in different ways. The employers save money by recruiting expatriates with low wages instead of hiring locals with higher wages. According to Subramaniam (2007) a fundamental reason why a developed nation like the USA prefers to employ expatriates from a lesser-developed nation like some of the Asian countries, is that there is an opportunity to gain by employing a foreign (Japanese) national in a developed domestic nation (USA). This is according to the lower wage / salary of an expatriate, compared to an equivalent domestic person, e.g. a computer programmer’s salary could be US$ 72,000 per annum to a domestic (USA) professional, whilst the salary for an expatriate professional (Japanese) could be US$ 48,000 per annum. This provides a net yearly opportunity gain of US$ 24,000 per annum for the employing country (USA).

Another positive impact of expatriates on the economy of receiving countries is likely to be greater when migration provides labour for business expansion and enhances demand for goods and services within the host country as migrants settle into communities, begin paying taxes and spending in the local economy (Ahn, 2004).

The socio-cultural impact of expatriates can be interpreted through the mutual influence between the two parties. While expatriates affect the culture in one way, they are influenced by the culture in another way. Although many expatriates find their overseas job thrilling, all of them experience some degree of disorientation, confusion and anxiety as they adjust to their host country’s culture. In addition to the challenges of a
foreign language and society, expatriates often find themselves on a journey of self discovery, questioning their personal goals, values and purpose (Heher, 2005).

However, expatriates have a social impact on the society of host country when they move from their country of origin to the host country, they bring with them their culture such as: languages; costumes; habits and traditions; foods. They also transfer knowledge of the language, culture and other values learnt in the host country to their home country (Baruah and Cholewinski, 2006).

All of these aspects influence the host country, for instance; the governments of GCC states are concerned about the social and cultural implications of the presence of a large number of foreigners. The negative influence of expatriates on the national cultures, identities and values as well as social structures remains a big concern for the nationals (Kapiszewski, 2001). In particular, authorities are worried about the influence of Asian nannies or expatriate teachers, (who form the majority of school staff), on local children. Raising children without proper attention to Islamic and Arabic values is their main concern. They are also unhappy at the growing influence of the foreign media and the large number of foreign women getting marrying Arabic nationals (Kapiszewski, 2006).

Furthermore, there are concerns that employing expatriates can limit employment opportunities for locals. This situation has occurred elsewhere, for example, there is evidence that the use of foreign workers in Taiwan in manufacturing, construction and social services increased unemployment amongst the local labour force (Heher, 2005). In the Sultanate of Oman the issue being discussed in different TV programmes. One of these programmes is “Darayesh 2”. The programme discusses the issue of expatriates
managing the company and offering the Omani applicants to stay at home and paid an amount of 100 OMR monthly, meanwhile another expatriate worker is doing the job (Darayesh 2, 2008). This issue is to prove that the companies achieved target levels of Omanisation, and confirmed the issue being discussed by Valeri (2005) that the company register Omanis in accordance with the Omanisation Plan implementation and pay them the specified rate; meanwhile the expatriate does the work, with no complaints, at a minimum cost.

In the hospitality industry which is of a heterogeneous nature, different nationalities can be seen at different levels. Expatriate managers can be seen as denoting a rather more strategic use of HR by MNCs. In addition to this more strategic movement of individual managers, individuals may also choose to move internationally in their search for work and enhanced career development.

Gliatis and Guerrier (1993) on their research with expatriate managers reported that expatriation was likely to be more appropriate for operational roles, such as general manager, resident manager, food and beverage manager and room division managers, whilst locals would ordinarily fill the positions of personnel managers, financial managers and chief engineers depending on their local expertise.

According to Gliatis and Guerrier (1993) companies would see the rationale for expatriation as comprising a number of different reasons. First, is to solve specific staffing shortages or problems in particular positions. Second is with regards to the management development process, where managers would benefit from the exposure of a range of countries, cultures and international issues. Another reason is that transfers are seen as encouraging global co-ordination, integration and commitment to the
company which enhances the process of organisational development. A further reason may be also more control oriented, is that organisations will seek to integrate via the use of (home country) expatriate managers to spread the co-ordination 'glue' of corporate culture to ensure that organisational practices and policies are 'correctly' applied.

2.8 Hospitality Industry Issues

In some geographical and sub-sector areas, tourism and hospitality provides attractive working conditions, and high-status working environments with competitive pay. However, the other side of the coin is one of poor working conditions, low pay, skills gaps, skills-recruitment problems with the virtual absence of professionalism and high staff turnover (Baum 1995 cited in Nickson, 2002). Globally, the industry is facing real challenges in recruiting, developing and maintaining a committed, competent, well-managed and well-motivated workforce which focuses on offering a high-quality product to increasingly demanding and discerning customers (Nickson, 2000).

Hospitality enterprises in many destinations around the world draw on labour from abroad to meet their needs, and expatriate employees offer flexibility and help to alleviate staffing shortages, as well as providing expertise that might not otherwise be available. However, this often invokes controversy because hiring high numbers of expatriates has negative consequences for domestic job-seekers (Sadi and Henderson, 2005). Employment in the tourism and hospitality industry globally is challenged by many key problems and issues such as; low wages, poor working conditions, poor attitudes, lack of security and promotion, long working hours, and the employees are seen as cheap labour and a burden. Another issue is the training in the industry, which
has been limited, and the industry has not sought highly-trained and qualified staff, as a result of this, the staff turnover is very high (Getz, 1994; Kusluvan, 2003).

According to Holt (2002:1):

*entering the hospitality industry was like venturing into a brave new world. Moving from the security and predictability of high school and home, the anxiety of the new and shadowy place: the late nights and early mornings, split shifts, long hours, hot and sweaty kitchens, the constant mix and clash of cultures and languages, the noise, the rush, the tension, the constant weariness, running on adrenalin, and getting paid next to nothing for the privilege.*

The issues relating to the hospitality industry can be classified into three categories: employment issues; education and training issues; cultural and social issues. Each category consists of different issues (figure 2.2) and will be discussed in turn below. Brien (2004) observes that the issues illustrated in figure 2.2 are complex and interrelated.
2.8.1 Employment Issues

2.8.1.1 Recruitment and Selection

"The hospitality industry not only in UK but throughout much all of the world appears to have a recruitment problem associated with a poor image as an employer" (Boella, 2000:52).

"Recruitment is at heart a 'search' process" (Riley, 1996:109). It is also the key interface between the firm and the external labour market (Baldacchino, 2000). Recruitment refers to the process of finding possible candidates for a job or function. It is the process of generating a pool of qualified applicants for a position within the organisation (Tesone, 2005). Boella (1996:62) defines recruitment as "the process used
to attract suitable applicants from whom the most suitable person may be selected for a particular job”.

The ultimate act of the recruitment process, from vacancy, through advertising to interviewing, is the selection of the most suitable candidate and the subsequent offer of the job (Goss-Turner, 1999). The HR department is generally responsible for the recruitment process. The selection is the process through which the organisation chooses the applicant best suited to the vacant position and the company (Mondy and Noe III, 1993). In order to recruit successfully, it is important to have an understanding of labour markets, and in order to understand the labour market in the hospitality industry, it is important to discuss the primary and secondary labour markets (Boella, 1992; Goldsmith et al, 1997).

The primary labour market consists of those people who, through education, training and experience, are committed to an industry or a sector of the industry (Boella, 2000), and characterised by high levels of skill and permanence of employment (Pizam, 2005). In the hospitality industry these include hotel managers, chefs, hotel receptionist, hall porters and cocktail bar staff (Vinten, 1998; Brien, 2004). On the other hand, the secondary labour market consists of people who are not committed to the industry although they have skills of use to an employer (Boella, 1992; Ohkusa et al., 1997). The secondary labour market also the source of peripheral workers, and is characterised by less skilled, less-valued and often part-time or causal workers (Pizam, 2005), including housewives, students and unskilled working people (Boella, 2000).

The recruitment process begins with a signal or announcement by an organisation or a manager which initiates employee requisition; which is the document that specifies job
title, department, the date the employee is needed to start the work, and other details (Mondy and Noe III 1993; Edwards et al, 2003; Nickson, 2006). The next step is to determine whether qualified employees are available within the firm (internal sources), or must be recruited from external sources, such as colleges, universities and other organisations (Mondy and Noe III 1993; Tanke, 2000). As a result of the high cost of recruiting, organisations need to find the most productive recruitment sources, where well-qualified employees can be found. They also need to find the most effective methods available, whereby potential employees can be attracted to the firm, and when the source of potential employees have been identified, appropriate methods for internal or external recruitment are used to achieve recruitment objectives (Mondy and Noe III 1993).

The recruitment process can be summarised according to Edwards, Scott and Raju (2003) in five steps as depicted in figure 2.3. The first step of recruitment is that the organisation signals or announces the job vacancy, which in turn produces job applicants (step 2), the third step involves an exchange of information between organisation and applicant, if the applicants require additional information or vice versa. Offers to the applicant are made in the fourth step of the process and either the applicant accepts or rejects the offer in the fifth step.
According to Baum (2002), finding the right person to recruit, in which right here defined as including ability, qualifications, and experiences, is becoming more difficult, which can be due to reasons such as working hours, conditions, pay and image (Brien, 2004). In many organisations, recruitment is a purely numerical process concentrating on the numbers of staff recruited. However, the process should concentrate on bringing in new members who carry the right professional qualifications and who have values that harmonize well with the values of the organisation (Dieleman and Leenders, 2000). Hospitality employers are often compelled by an immediate need to hire poorly-skilled people, or people without formal training, to fill vacancies, especially in the high season; there is also an increasing use of casual labour which in turn causes weak links between employers in the sector and training agencies (Moyle, 2008).
In some hotels, the recruitment process itself can be strategic. They deliberately encourage the use of contingent labour (part-time) to achieve flexibility and to manage their labour cost, but while this approach meets their financial needs, it has the effect of projecting an image that the industry is only interested in cost and nothing else (Brien, 2004).

Searching for new strategies to increase the labour pool for recruitment and to deal with the image of hospitality, two schemes used have shown some success. The first scheme is in the United States of America where the initiative was to promote the industry in schools to match employee shortages, and the second scheme is in the United Kingdom which saw the creation of Springboard UK, which is sponsored by major national and international hospitality businesses with the organisation facilitating practical work experience opportunities, promotion of the industry in schools, seminars, and scholarships (Brien, 2004).

In each of the above strategies several key points exist as Brien (2004:37) stated:

1- They are looking forward and outside of the industry;
2- Both are major national promotional campaigns by which prospective employees hear about the industry;
3- Each clearly spelt out what the industry had to offer;
4- Each focused on a positive industry image; and
5- They are cooperatively industry driven.

Brien (2004) compared two organisations and how they increase their labour pool. His comments on the tourism and hospitality industry in New Zealand highlighted that recruitment in the industry does not reflect a positive image and that while potential
internal and external recruitment strategies are essential, once the new employee is engaged, the next challenge is to retain them. According to Brien (2004:37) the New Zealand Standards Institute reports industry concerns relating to recruitment as being:

*Good people with attitude and motivation are in short supply. Poor employers create a reputation that tarnishes the entire industry. Low wages, long hours, less-than-generous work conditions contribute to a perception to the industry as being tough and unwelcoming. Industry tends to attract youth with limited life experience. Employees have unrealistic perceptions about their own ability, they expect higher wages than those offered and assume they can fast-track their way through the industry.*

The recent strategy of recruitment adopted by many Jamaican inclusive hotels is to target those employees who see themselves as having a career with the hotel, rather than a job. Associated with this trend is the move toward recruiting employees who have superior educational qualifications and are willing to receive further training in the industry to enhance the employee’s retention (Jayawardena and Crick, 2000).

Laypersons commonly think of recruitment and selection practices as a single process, but this is not the case as recruitment is concerned with the generation of a pool of qualified applicants. On the other hand, the selection process aims to choose the qualified individual from the applicants for placement in positions within the organisation (Tesone, 2005).

Effective employee selection is a process by the HR manager to seek the right candidate for a specific job vacancy. The direct result of poor selection decisions is seen in high turnover that translates into higher costs for recruitment, selection, and training (Tanke, 2000). In some organisations, however, most people accept that, economic and human considerations apart, the best method would be to employ a person for a period of time, during this period, they see if he/she proved satisfactory in order to offer him/her the
job. But this is not a practical method, although 'trial periods' are used both consciously and unconsciously in most industries. Selection procedures, instead, need to be designed in order to elicit the most useful and appropriate information in the most economical way (Boella, 1996).

In the past two decades, the selection process has dramatically improved. The hospitality managers who once hired just to fill a job vacancy have come to realise the importance of developing a comprehensive selection plan for their hospitality organisation (Tanke, 2000).

2.8.1.2 Aesthetic Labour

It has been noted in section 2.8.1.1 that recruiting and selecting people to fill new or existing positions and job vacancies is a crucial element of human resource activity in all tourism and hospitality organisations regardless size, structure or activity (Boella, 2000, Tanke, 2000). It is also important to note that any organisation must fill their vacancies with the right person for the right job (Goss-Turner, 1999; Dieleman and Leenders, 2000; Tesone, 2005). The choice of the right person by the organisation depends on the skills required and appointed by the organisation, and on the person specification which describes the candidate personal skills and characteristics required to fill the job.

With the shift to a service economy, the type of skills demanded by employers has also shifted. Employers in hospitality in UK and elsewhere increasingly desire employees with the 'right' attitude and appearance (Nickson, 2007). The right attitude includes aspects such as social and interpersonal skills, which are largely concerned with
ensuring employees are responsive, courteous and understanding with customers, it could be simply termed as emotional labour (Nickson, 2007), whereas aesthetic labour means the ability of ‘looking good’ or ‘sounding right’. Aesthetic labour points at the increasing importance of the way in which employees are expected to physically embody the firm’s image in tourism and hospitality.

Aesthetics are a sensory experience through which objects appeal in a distinctive way. This appeal does not mean that it is necessary to be beautiful but rather, and more simply, expressive (Nickson, 2007). The concept of aesthetic labour opens up the possibility of seeing how, through the embodied performance of interactive service work, the physical capital of employees is valorised and converted into economic capital by and for organisations (Witz et al., 2003).

Employers are increasingly looking for workers who can portray the firm’s image through their work, and at the same time appealing to the sense of customers (Pender and Sharpley, 2005). Warhurst et al., (2004) in their pilot study conducted in Glasgow (1997-98) revealed that not only did aesthetic labour exist but that it was seemingly important to employers. They also suggested “that there were ‘hotspots’ of companies-designer retailers, boutique hotels and style bars, cafes and restaurants-that had developed aesthetic labour through their recruitment, selection, training and management practices, creating what we termed a ‘style labour market’” (Warhurst et al, 2004:2).

Developing the skills and attributes of aesthetic labour can commence during recruitment and selection. This starting point will incorporate aesthetic labour into human resource management in the tourism and hospitality sector. The overemphasis of
appearance and personality at the expense of technical skills in recruitment and selection means that the organisation has to train the ‘desired person’ with the appropriate technical skills once they have entered the employment.

Training is provided in customer service skills, instructing employees in body language, and verbal interaction with customers in terms of what to say and how to say it, they also training them about dress code and uniform standards (Nickson and Warhurst, 2006). External consultants are employed to give grooming and deportment training to the employees. This training can include sessions in hair styling, acceptable make-up, individual make-overs, how men should shave and the standards expected in relation to appearance (Warhurst et al., 2000). The organisations are also increasingly taking an interest in further refining the corporate image through things such as uniforms and dress codes for employees once recruited and selected (Warhurst et al, 2004).

It is important to note that aesthetic skills do not replace but complement social and technical skills. In the style labour market, management need and employees use, a matrix of skills; technical, social and aesthetic (Nickson et al., 2003). Spiess and Waring (2005) in their research about aesthetic labour in the Asia Pacific airline industry noted that airlines are focused increasingly on service delivery and many have sought to compete by marketing a service image that may be consistent with customers’ expectations of high quality service. They argue that the “service image” or organisational aesthetic” heavily rely on the use of aesthetic labour and which tends to be sexualised.

It is essential to consider the blurring boundary between aesthetic and sexualised labour. According to Warhurst and Nickson (2005) organisations may stipulate the appearance
of employees if the regulations with regards the aesthetic serve the purposes of branding and marketing the organisations, are in the business interests of the organisation and non-discriminatory. So if the organisations can prove these, then they have the legal right to regulate worker image and appearance.

The boundary between aesthetic and sexualised labour is largely determined by the way in which the customer interprets the messages, conveyed through advertising or evident in the firm’s employment strategy, and acts on this interpretation in the service encounter (Spiess and Waring, 2005). Witz et al. (2003) argued this point stating that, while there are important gendered and sexualised dimensions to aesthetic labour, it is by no means only female labour that is subject to commodification via aestheticisation.

### 2.8.1.3 Emotional Labour

The rapid rise of the service sector has made the study of emotional labour as an emerging key issue in the modern work setting as increasingly important within the area of occupational stress research. The work environment is a field where experiences such as pleasure, sadness, jealousy, rage, guilt and love are demonstrated to the same varying levels of intensity and frequency as elsewhere in people’s everyday lives (Cassell, 1999). “Emotions are an integral and undividable part of everyday organisational life. From moments of frustrations or joy or fear, to an enduring sense of dissatisfaction or commitment, the experience of work is saturated with feeling” (Ashforth and Humphry, 1995:99).

A major feature of the hospitality workplace is the encounter between the server and the served where the employees perform emotional labour (Chappel, 2004). Hospitality
employees seek to convey a desirable image designed to please the customer through the performance of emotional labour. This product of emotional labour has an exchange value. Businesses sell it, customers buy it, and employees earn wages for producing it (Chappel, 2004).

Hochschild (2003:7) defines the emotional labour as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value”. Hochschild argued that service agents are expected to experience and express certain feeling during service interactions, but that attempting to conform to those expectations causes certain pernicious psychological effects among the agents (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993).

Ashforth and Humphry (1993) define emotional labour as the act of displaying the appropriate emotion. This definition differs somewhat from Hochschild’s. Ashforth and Humphry (1993) focus on behaviour rather than on the presumed emotions underlying behaviour. They based their definition on their preference of display rules instead of feeling rules as the former refers to what emotions ought to be publicly expressed rather than to what emotions are actually felt.

According to Ashforth and Humphry (1993:96) “emotional labour is a double-edged sword”. It could be functional when it helps to “facilitate task effectiveness by providing the service worker with a means to regulate what are often dynamic and emergent interactions and thus provide the worker with a sense of increased self-efficacy” (Lewig and Dollard, 2003: 368). On the other edge, it could be “dysfunctional for the worker when dissonance between felt emotions and displayed emotions is experienced” (Lewig and Dollard, 2003: 368).
Hochschild (2003) argued that a service provider performs emotional labour in one of two ways. First, he or she may comply with display rules through surface acting. The second means of complying with display rules is through deep acting. The surface acting involves simulating emotions that are not actually felt or experienced, while deep acting involves both a display and the emotional experiences (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993). In the deep acting (or psyching up) one attempts to actually feel the emotions that one wishes to display.

Witz et al. (2003:47) asserted that the personnel manager at Elba Hotels said of its recruitment and selection:

_We actually didn’t look for people with experience... because we felt that wasn’t particularly important. We wanted people with personality more than skills because we felt that we could train people to do the job. Personality was more important. How you handled the customers and how you relate to people was more important that whether you could carry a plate of taken an order._

According to Hochschild (2003) emotional labour is potentially good on the basis that no customer wants or likes to deal with a surly waitress, crabby bank clerk, or a flight attendant who avoids eye contact in order to avoid getting a request. Organisations require employees to display or experience particular emotions. In return, employees may be rewarded- not only in term of wages, but perhaps by increases in status or greater choice about job tasks (Briner, 1999).

The problem with the concept of emotional labour is that does not allow for the instance whereby one spontaneously and genuinely experiences and expresses the expected emotion (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993).

Hochschild (2003) asserted that organisations lay claim not only simply to employee’s physical motions - how they do the job, but to their emotional actions and the way
shown in the ease of their smile. She also noted that the workers she talked to often spoke of their smiles as being on them but not of them. They were seen as an extension of the make-up, the uniform, the recorded music, or all other things complement the mood of the passengers.

Although by the 1940s human relations training was well in place, aimed at assisting ‘well controlled’ managers and professionals to hear, diffuse and smooth the angers and anxieties of workers (Fineman, 1996), today’s rhetoric of emotional control is still in place, but its emphasis has been shifted. Negative feelings are understandable and to be expected because work can be stressful for anyone (Fineman, 1996).

People vary in the type and level of organisational stress they can face, which can be stressful for some people; whilst it can be stimulating to others (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2008). And what can be functional for the organisation and customer may well be dysfunctional for the service provider (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993).

Rutter and Feilding (1991 cited in Ashforth and Humphry, 1993) found that a perceived need to suppress emotions in the workplace was positively associated with overall stress and negatively associated with job satisfaction. Hochschild (2003) argued the pernicious effect of both surface and deep acting on the service provider. She asserts that portraying emotions that are not felt (surface acting) create a sense of strain or emotive dissonance, which is similar to cognitive dissonance. This emotional dissonance may cause the individual to feel false and hypocritical. Such dissonance could lead to personal work-related maladjustment, such as poor self-esteem, depression, cynicism and alienation from work (Lewig and Dollard, 2003). Self alienation may also result
when the worker stop to feel or recognise authentic emotions (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993).

According to Ashforth (1989 cited in Ashforth and Humphry, 1993) deep acting may distort the emotional reactions and impair one's sense of authentic self. Ultimately, deep acting may lead to self-alienation as one loses touch with this authentic self, and it may affect one's ability to recognise or even experience genuine emotion.

Although some researchers (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993; Fineman, 1996; Hochschild. 2003) have supported the prediction that emotional labour can be psychologically uniformly damaging, and increased perceptions of job stress, decrease satisfaction, and increased stress. However Wharton (1993 cited in Parkinson et al., 2005) studied psychological consequences of emotional labour among bank and hospital employees, and found that emotional labour did not have any negative consequences for employees. In contrast Lewig and Dollard (2003) in their research on call centre workers found out that the most stressful aspect of call centre work was dealing with negative emotions such as angry, abusive, and dissatisfied customers. This suggest that dissonance between felt emotions and displayed emotions rather than the requirement to express positive and negative emotions per se contributes to strain and job satisfaction among the call centre workers.

People vary in their expectations of emotional display from their counterparts from culture to another. Mann (2007) compared the expectations of emotional display in the workplace between Americans and Britons and found out that British respondents expected more positive emotional displays from people they encounter in service transactions (such as shop assistants, supermarket clerks and fast-food servers) than
from their colleagues at work. Americans in contrast tended to expect more positive displays from their colleagues at work than from service personnel. Parkinson et al. (2005) suggests that one way to overcome this contradictory finding is to draw on the concept of identity which will be discussed in the next section.

2.8.1.4 Worker Identity

It is widely accepted that work plays a major role in the individual identity construction. Workers actively construct knowledge from their work and from the interactions they have with one another. Therefore, their identities are also constructed, in part, through the embodied performance of daily tasks, from the judgments and mistakes they make during their work and by practicing of solving problems (Timma, 2005).

Ashforth and Humphry (1993) and Parkinson et al. (2005) assert that if the employee strongly identifies with the work role and the associated emotional prescriptions, he or she will less likely to suffer from the emotional labour required by suitable performance of the role. According to Cato (2000) identities within society have been traditionally determined largely by the work that people do.

According to Ashforth and Humphry (1993) social identity theory suggests that individuals, who strongly identify with their organisational roles, are apt to feel most authentic when they are conforming to role expectations. In other words, they are most truly ‘themselves’ (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993). Therefore, It is also important to note that the individuals feel more authentic if the role they display is consistent with their central valued elements, even if their social identity is weak (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993). On the contrary, if emotional labour is inconsistent with individual’s
central, salient, and valued social and/or personal identity, it will lead to emotive dissonance and individual feels unauthentic (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993). They also added that individuals vary in the degree to which they identify with a given identification object. However, because positions that require emotional labour often involve not only cognitive and behavioural input into task performance but also emotional input, there tends to be greater internal and external pressure to identify with position, if not with organisation. Marsh and Musson (2008) see identity as something that is presented through narrative accounts, and defined it as encompassing visual performance and interaction, as well as talk. They also see identity as being created largely in reference to hegemonic discourses.

In the hospitality industry “when the relationship with the guest is good the hospitality employee may feel that is he or she as a person that is relating to the guest, that something approaching genuine friendship” (Guerrier and Adib, 2001:268).

2.8.1.5 Labour Turnover and Staff Retention

The term ‘turnover’ means “voluntary cessation of membership of an organisation by an employee of that organisation” (Morrell et al, 2001:6). Denvir and McMahon (1992:143) also defined labour turnover as “the movement of people into and out of employment within an organisation”. This turnover can be voluntary or involuntary (Denvir and McMahon, 1992; Cheng and Brown, 1998).

It is important to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary turnover, involuntary turnover may occur for reasons which are independent of the affected employee(s), such as a (real or perceived) need to cut costs, restructuring or downsizing. Meanwhile
voluntary turnover represents the exercise of choice and is the result of a decision process. Turnover is thought to be associated with various factors (including organizational commitment), or to be preceded by a psychological state (such as intent to quit) (Morrell et al, 2001). The hospitality industry is confronted with the issue of retaining and attracting high quality employees (Jameson, 2000). Compared to other industries the turnover rates are extremely high (Hartman and Yrle, 1996; Tanke, 2000).

One of the main reasons for recruitment and retention issues is the negative industry image. *Hospitality industry magazine reported; the industry's image was the main barrier to recruitment* (Brien, 2004:36). The hospitality industry has been characterised in terms of high turnover rates, a part-time and casual workforce, and absence of an internal labour market— for instance low job security, promotional opportunity and career development, plus low wages and low skill levels (Iverson and Deery, 1997).

The issues related to retention of employees, have been well studied and documented (Iverson and Deery, 1997; Cheng and Brown, 1998; Brien, 2004) with many researchers suggesting that recruitment and retention are linked. As an outcome of past studies and research about retention, a number of programs/plans have been reported as 'potential retention enhancers' for example incentive programs, child-care facilities, career development opportunities, employee assistance programs, and employee stockholdings (Fisher et al, 2003). The success of these enhancers depends on property location and management and company culture. These programmes/plans can lead to encourage employee retention in the industry and, at the same time, provide a positive image of the industry.
Turnover is associated also with the pay in the industry, according to Pavesic and Brymer (1989), many graduates leave the hospitality industry for other careers, and one of the major issues for lack of retention is the pay level. Timo and Davidson (1999) found in their research that labour turnover remains a significant feature of working in the hotel and tourism industry, and the reasons given by employees for leaving traditionally include taking up another better paid job within the tourism industry, and moving to another location. Their research also suggested that the move to jobs outside the industry improved job security for those respondents seeking employment outside the industry, with more security and income.

Riley (1996) argued that there is a relationship between the period the employee spends in his job, and turnover, he noted that “the longer a person stays in a job, the less likely he or she is to leave” (Riley 1996:9), and the longer a person stays in a job, the more comfortable the job becomes to the employee. He also added that there is a relationship between recruitment and turnover. He explains that when the business expands, the proportion of new recruits with a high tendency to leave is higher than normal, thus number of leavers increase. In another words, when recruitment has stopped the rate of labour turnover will decline, because the workforce will simply be getting older in their jobs (Riley, 1996).

Retention in the job, could be related to the expectation of the employee of what he or she could become after period of time in the same job, It is also common for individuals when considering their career progression and career planning to say ‘by the time I am X, I want to be Y’ or, ‘in three years time I expect to be....’ (Ladkin, 2002:380). So the
more the employee expects from the job the less he or she intends to leave the job, therefore the turnover is less.

A correlation appears also between turnover and age, gender, and determinants. According to Iverson and Deery (1997), employees who believe in the legitimacy of labour, do not have pride in the organisation and believe there are many alternative jobs in the labour market, are more likely to leave. In addition to the determinants, the correlates of age and gender were positively and negatively significant. That is, younger employees have a higher tendency to leave than older employees, and male employees were less likely to stay than females. It has also been argued that poor working conditions have a key role in determining whether employees remain in their jobs or decide to leave the organisation (Lee-Ross, 1999).

Pizam and Ellis (1999) suggest that turnover varies by the size of the establishment. Small businesses are usually not part of a larger operation such as a chain. They are usually single outlets, operated as a sole proprietorship, more likely to hire individuals they know, and more stable. But a major chain or corporation will most likely use more impersonal hiring procedures which results in errors and attracts employees who intend to move to other jobs in an attempt to gain experience or to further their careers. However, the consequences of turnover are the same for establishments of all sizes. Any organisation should invest a lot in their human resources in terms of induction, training and developing, maintaining and retaining them in the organisation. Therefore, managers should at all cost minimise employee’s turnover (Ongori, 2007).

According to Timo and Davidson (1999), turnover can be tackled by appropriate managerial action, and also by better recruitment and selection practices, higher wages,
more training, career advancement, multi-skilling, and worker participation. They also suggest that hotels need to expend greater energy on choosing the ‘right’ person and adopt more widespread reward and benefits package in order to retain the right staff.

It would appear that the industry has created a turnover culture, where there is a normative belief among workers that relatively high turnover is quite acceptable. Therefore the HR managers are responsible to promote a permanent employment culture though observable artefacts, such as stories of employees gaining tenure, through the values expressed and practiced by both line staff and management, and through a determined, deliberate effort to promote a perception of the organization as one which values long-term commitment. Managers should deal with subgroups rather than the workforce as a whole in order to stop the spread of a turnover culture. This could be achieved by improving the communication channels, reducing the role conflict, by addressing both work and social issues of groups and conveying to employees that the culture is changing from one of turnover to one of retention

(Iverson and Deery, 1997:79).

2.8.1.6 Job Continuity and Security

The fear of being laid off, of having to seek another job, of having to move in order to find work, makes the need for security a dominant need and one of the principal reasons for working for many skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers (Super, 1957).

Dominitz and Manski (1997:262 cited in McLaren 2001:5) found that:

Although job insecurity was very much part of the American public discourse, and many studies described the outcomes that individuals actually experience, little about the outcomes that individuals actually expect has been documented.

According to McLaren (2001) little research exists on the phenomenon of job insecurity as it pertains to ongoing employability.

While the hospitality industry increases the employer’s flexibility by employing people on short contracts on one hand, this reduces job security for the employees on the other hand (Boella, 1992). Employees, therefore, see this job insecurity as a source of stress.
involving fear, potential loss and anxiety (Ashford et al, 1989). “To many, the job provides the ‘source of pride’ and value in life and loss thereof produces symptoms of ‘existential mistrust’” (Bauman, 1999:18).

Unlike workers in the 1970s and 1980s who valued interesting work above everything, today’s workers place the highest value on job security and good wages (Karl and Sutton, 1998). Comparisons between job security in the public and private sector revealed that many people joined the public sector, either because they had a public-service ethos or because they were prepared to sacrifice higher income for higher perceived long-term job security (Worrall et al, 1998). People who state that their job is secure have a much larger probability of reporting themselves happy with their work (Blanchflower and Oswald, 2000).

According to Clark and Postel-Vinay (2005) the correlation between job security and education is stronger among temporary than permanent workers. With temporary workers being objectively more exposed to the risk of losing their jobs, and with the chance of finding replacement job being arguably lower for less-educated workers. They stated “lower-educated workers feel somewhat less secure than their higher-educated counterparts in all permanent job types, whereas education plays no role in terms of job security for temporary workers” (Clark and Postel-Vinay, 2005:10).

A relationship also appears between the type of work (part-time or full-time) and feeling secure. According to Sanders and Grip (2003) those who have a part-time contract feel less secure about their employability than those who have a full-time contract. (Clark and Postel-Vinay, 2005:10) also confirmed that “there is some mitigate evidence that temporary workers feel less secure” than holders of permanent jobs.
2.8.1.7 Remuneration and Working Conditions

a) Remuneration

In any industry in which labour is a significant cost, it is monitoring and control which is vital. This is also the case in the hospitality industry which has a reputation for low pay. A labour cost does indicate whether an employer employs a few people at high cost of pay or a large number of people at low rates of pay, so it is important for any establishment to manage well to monitor both its labour costs and its productivity (Boella, 1996).

Decreasing income could be one of the reasons why professionals in hospitality look for job opportunities in other sectors (Hjalager and Andersen, 2001). The low pay is related to low level of skills as Timo and Davidson (1999) discussed in their research about the hotel and tourism workers. They noted that the hotel and tourism workers are generally low paid. Real average hourly earning for all non-managerial hotel and tourism employees are lower than the all-industry average for Australian workers in the period of 1980-90. Nickson (2000) also emphasises on the same issue asserting that low pay is often cited as the main reason for people leaving the hospitality industry, and plays a major role in high levels of labour turnover.

b) Working Conditions

Working conditions are considered to be an important issue in the hospitality industry as its image is one of long working hours, shift work, lifting heavy catering equipment, etc. All these issues give an impression that hospitality work is difficult, and its working hours are unsocial.
Work stress can be defined as a perceived imbalance between (internal and external) demands (stressors) facing the individual and the perceived ability to cope with the situation (ILO, 2003). Thus the conflict between long working hours and shift work (work during nonstandard hours), and work-family interface, including conflicts of loyalty, could lead to work stress as a result of spillover of demands from one domain to the other, and life events (Cleveland et al, 2007).

Scholars (e.g. Baum, 2006; Nickson, 2007) recognize that often there is a low status ascribed to the industry, the perception held by a number of people is that for many, tourism and hospitality is an employer of last resort, with mundane, degrading employment.

The unsocial hours factor alone suggests that hotel and hospitality management as ‘a life’ is out of the ordinary (Riley, 1996). Long working hours correlated with different aspects; it has a strong relation with work stress and employees’ health, it is also associated with family commitment and social life.

There is evidence that work-life conflict arising from long or socially undesirable working hours, particularly in the evening or on weekends, has negative effects on health (Bohle et al. 2004). Occupational and Environmental Medicine (1997 cited in BMA, 2000:1) reported that:

*Long hours act both directly as a stressor, in increasing the demands on a person who attempts to maintain performance levels in the face of increasing fatigue, and indirectly by increasing the time that a worker is exposed to other sources of workplace stress.*
According to Ross (1995) work stress is one of the most important issues facing management. He also added that work stress affects performance at all levels of staff, ranging from senior management to the young and newly-employed.

According to Cleveland et al (2007), despite the paucity of research, many characteristics of jobs in the hospitality industry have long been associated with work-family conflict and stress concerns (e.g. long hours scheduled at non-standard times, on-call hours, emphasis on face time and geographic mobility as a prerequisite for career advancement).

The relationship between working hours and family life is complex. In some cases, earnings from longer working hours relieve stress and strain in family life that flows from financial stressors (Pocock and Wilson, 2001). However in other cases, long working hours create negative consequences for families where jobs are demanding and pressure and extended hours exist in combination (Pocock and Wilson, 2001).

It is not unusual for full-time hotel employees to work 60 hours or more per week, such hours are not only excessive, but they are also unsocial hours which limits normal social activities, and it might also limit the available time for employees' family (Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004).

The industry is also known for its poor health and safety record (ILO, 2003). The ILO (2003) defined different hazards of hospitality work, for instance, in the kitchen the employees usually exposed to a number of hazards namely: wet floors; contact cleaning chemicals and food substances causing skin problems; lifting heavy catering equipment leading to back and other musculoskeletal injuries; contact with hot surfaces causing burns; contact with cooking fumes; work in hot temperatures; cuts from knives and...
dangerous machinery. In bars and pubs and restaurants in some countries workers are also exposed to tobacco smoke, which puts them under the risk of developing respiratory problems. Angry and abusive customers- especially if under the influence of alcohol or drugs, long hours and shift work, bullying in restaurant kitchens and hotels, and noises from loud music are other hazards in pubs, bars and clubs. All these factors combine to convey a negative image of hospitality career and my lead to turnover as Chappel and Henry (1991 cited in Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004:239) reported:

*the high levels of turnover experienced in this industry may in part be attributed to stressors such as the constant demands for pleasant and courteous service, and poor management practices, especially in the areas of communication, motivation, and feedback.*

2.8.2 Education and Training Issues

2.8.2.1 Education, Training and Development

Education plays a major role in economic performance in all sectors of the economy, and tourism is hardly likely to be an exception (Hjalager and Andersen, 2001). The education, training and development of employees of all levels within tourism, hospitality and leisure are important factors in maintaining the industry’s competitiveness in the international arena (Baum, 2006). The distinction between education and training, has taxed philosophers and thinkers for centuries. According to Russell (1960 cited in Baum 1995) in his debate about education and training considering that which is ‘ornamental’ in education in his terms refers to a classical education, and that which is ‘useful’ includes the sciences and applied vocational areas. It is sufficient to say that the distinction between education and training is unauthentic and unhelpful in the context of human resource management for tourism, hospitality and leisure (Baum, 2006).
Training is a planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge, skills and attitudes through learning experiences, which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience to achieve effective performance in any activity or a range of activities (Garavan, 1997; Armstrong, 2001).

In order to prosper in the hospitality industry, all the stakeholders in hospitality management education have to engage with it positively. For those who are willing to study in the area and willing to pay for the privilege, the global economy and fast-changing technological environment offers ever-increasing choice as to where and how to study. Employers also have choices of where from to recruit employees, they can choose them from different countries, educational centres, and different vocational disciplines (Rimmington, 1999).

According to Mullins (1995) staff are an important but expensive resource, and it is important to optimise their contribution to improving effective organisational performance. A significant factor in the image of the hospitality industry, in the performance and retention of employees and levels of productivity is the extent and quality of staff education, training and development. Higher-level education and training for hospitality and tourism generally maintains a clear commitment to the development of skills designed to complement more generic educational and business development objectives (Baum, 2002).

In recent years the training of the workforce has received increased attention from UK industry and government. It has been argued that most of the work in hospitality industry comprises a bundle of usually low-level tasks requiring a certain amount of discretionary self-organisation (Wood, 1994). It is increasingly known that human
resource development (HRD) is crucial for effectiveness, and continuous development will ensure that organisations can survive and compete. However, the importance of training and development is not just important for the organisations, but is also important for individuals. As there an increasing engagement with lifelong learning, then training and development become more important for individuals, moreover, it is also important for national competitiveness. So it is clear that training and development is important from the individual, organisational and national perspective (Nickson, 2007).

Mondy and Noe III (1993) define HRD as the process which helps individuals, groups, and the entire organisation to become more effective. Because of changes amongst the people, jobs and organisations, HRD should be continuous from the time that the individuals join the organisation and continue throughout their career.

HRD aims to promote learning and provide people with the knowledge and portfolio of transferable skills that will help them to progress their career. A distinction can be made between the learning and development aspects, with learning seen as an increase in knowledge or a higher degree of an existing skill, whilst development refers to moving to a different state of being or functioning (Armstrong, 2001).

Although training is an important factor and facilitates employee's adaptation to a new work environment and to becoming a productive employee (Lam et al, 2002), historically, the hospitality industry has not been known for its high standards of training (Wood, 1994). The situation has not changed much in recent years. All organisations train their staff, and most of this training is centred on the mandated, and for all employees: health and safety for example. Such training is a feature for the
hospitality industry. Beyond that which is mandatory, other than for management and professional staff, training is relatively poor, at least in the UK. For part-time workers who feature heavily in the hospitality workforce, training is particularly weak (Warhurst and Nickson, 2006). But the question is ‘what kind of training?’ There are few hospitality industry jobs (chefs are an exception) which require employees to practice sophisticated technical or task-related skills in the same sense, as a computer programmer or production designer (Wood, 1994).

In the Caribbean tourism sector, the Caribbean tourism officials’ are working to develop the sector by developing language skills in the industry, and by considering the issues of the cultural diversity and also by the implication of the service delivery. It also needs to improve the industry status especially the design of regional training and development to address the challenges facing in the industry (Hinds et al., 2004).

Although the industry in China considers that the hardware context of hotels, restaurants, airports and transportation facilities have generally reached international standards, the software context in terms of employees service attitudes, skill levels, and language abilities still does not meet the expectations of international travellers. The employers in this industry feel that the poor quality of service providers in China is due to lack of visionary education and training plans provided by the Chinese government (Lam and Xiao, 2000).

Labour economists divide training programmes into general and specific training. The general training refers to training for basic knowledge, so that any worker would profit from it, whereas specific training refers to training which is unique to a specific workplace (Carrel et al, 2000). The training process to develop the performance of
employees, either newcomers or existing employees in any organisation, can be described as the process of defining the gap between what is happening and what should happen. Figure 2.4 shows the training gap, the difference between what people know and can do and what they should know and be able to do (Armstrong, 2001).

**Figure 2.4: The Training Gap**

![Training Gap Diagram](image)

**Source:** Armstrong (2001:552)

According to Korczynski (2002) the new service management writers argue that firms should provide wide-ranging and high-quality training of technical skills and knowledge for their newly-hired workforce. They also recommend that firms should train their front-line workforce in the interactive skills that lead to high customer satisfaction with service encounters. They argue that newcomers are like sponges which absorb whatever is thrown at them; therefore it is vital for the firms to direct the informal learning of the service workplace culture. The culture learned should be a customer-oriented one,
which is best produced by putting the new-comers in close contact with high performing; service oriented existing workers.

In the general HRM context/ philosophy, the emphasis is placed on ‘quality’ in the belief that the quality of the organisation and its products and services is closely relates to the quality of its staff or its employees (Wood, 1994). Dessler (2000) pointed out that the investment in human capital is the foundation and the major element of success in the knowledge–based global economy of the twenty-first century. HRD includes the employees and managers in an attempt to improve their performance by imparting knowledge, changing attitudes, or increasing skills. The HRD departments provide their employees with continuing training from basic remedial skills to advanced decision-making techniques throughout employees’ careers.

a) Cost of Training

One of the most difficult tasks in management is to encourage training. At the heart of this problem is the fact that the output of training is hard to assess, and the costs are hard to allocate. Attempts to measure an investment in training and the benefits ensuing from it are notoriously hard to establish (Lashley, 2002).

In relation to cost, according to Riley (1996:151),

*There are basically two approaches. First approach is to take a simple line and allocate only directly attributable costs to the function. The second is to take an economic approach which involves quantifying benefits and bringing into the calculation production costs and performance costs.*

However there may be a gap between the importance of training and development, and the willingness to do something about it. Many organisations in the hospitality industry are suspicious of training and development and see it as a cost and not as an investment
in their employees (Nickson, 2007). Hence such organisations do not appreciate or understand the importance of human capital in the long-term success and development of the organisation.

Cost is obviously a major consideration but should not be viewed in isolation. Not every activity can be identified as making a direct contribution to profitability. A balance must be kept between more-easily identified financial costs of the personnel function and less readily-apparent but very important long-term benefits which also make a positive contribution to effectiveness (Mullins, 1995).

Each organisation has objectives for training, and these objectives relate to costs, to enable better of training delivery and to the achievement of productivity. These objectives can be summarised according to Riley (1996:151) as:

- To improve performance;
- To shorten the period of training time;
- To obtain better employee retention; and
- To facilitate change.

The relationship between training and business performance is very strong, but estimating the benefits of training particularly in the context of potential contribution to improved business performance is clearly difficult to determine (Lashley, 2002).

Although there are importance benefits of training, some organisations think that training and development is an expensive investment in employees. They also think if staff are going to leave anyway, it does not make sense to invest heavily in their training and development (Baum, 1996).
b) Type and Level of Training

It has been noted earlier that development of human resources may be carried out via two approaches, the first approach being: formal academic education and the second approach being vocational training. While academic education attempts to convey to citizens a core basis of general knowledge, vocational training seeks to raise the level of workers’ skills, making them more employable, and better equipped to meet the workplaces’ needs (Huang, 2001).

Training methods could be broadly categorized by physical location as:

- On-the-job-training or
- Off-the-job-training

**On-the-job-training** is learning by doing, and it is the most used, and most abused, approach to training. Like other forms of training, it requires planning, structure, and supervision to be effective for development. When done correctly, it is sensible and cost-effective for training and assessing trainee’s performance in jobs, such as retail sales, food and beverage operatives, and check-in and check-out positions. It is done when another staff member from the organisation explains and trains other employees in the organisation, the essential skills of the position (Go et al. 1996; James, 2006).

Meanwhile, **off-the-job-training** allows for the development of broader and more conceptual skills while providing a practice environment for errors to be made, which need not be so costly. There are three forms of off-the-job training: in-house, external and independent. It may take several formats, including lectures and other classroom techniques, discussions, demonstrations, case studies and role plays, and simulations (Go, et al. 1996; Pizam, 2005).
2.8.3 Cultural and Social Issues

2.8.3.1 Social Attitudes

The hospitality industry globally has been confronted with the issue of retaining and attracting high quality employees (Jameson, 2000; Ferris et al., 2002; Qui and Lam, 2004). The hospitality industry is often viewed as a negative employment option and has a temporary or contingent job-label connected to it till a real job is available (Brien, 2004).

In the 1990s, in China for instance, many young people with a good educational background, believed that hotels provided a good working environment and higher than average salaries (Zhang and Wu, 2004). It was comparatively easy for hotels to attract high ability staff with a positive attitude to service to be recruited during that period. But now, with the globalization of industries such as IT and banking, the hotel industry’s social position in China has been undermined by negative publicity. So the current reality in the industry in China is that young people with good educational qualifications will tend to consider working for those industries which offer better paid positions and benefits. This means that most hotels cannot meet its employee’s expectations according to the poor financial situation (Zhang and Wu, 2004).

New recruits have high intentions to quit their job or leave the tourism industry when they find that the salary package in the industry is not as competitive as others, while the pressure or the stress at work is unexpectedly high (Lam and Xiao, 2000). This is partly attributed to the fact that educational institutions do not provide information for students so that, when the graduates join the industry, they are likely to encounter a reality shock about the nature of the job, work conditions, and human relations. Hence it is obvious that
knowledge correlated closely with interest, according to a study by Machatton and Owens (1997 cited in Cothran and Combrink, 1999) into New Mexico high school students' attitudes and levels of interest in over a hundred careers, from which hospitality jobs were extracted and analysed separately. One of the depressing findings of this study was that many students had little interest in any job, although more positively, it found that the more students knew about hospitality jobs, the more interested they were in those jobs.

Measuring the correlation between the work experience and perception of hospitality industry, their finding revealed that students who have worked in the hospitality industry, had positive or very positive impressions of hospitality job, which in turn built positive attitudes of working in the hospitality industry (Cothran and Combrink, 1999).

Different studies have been conducted to measure the perceptions of hospitality graduates of hospitality careers, employment decisions factors and college major choice variables. Umbreit and Diaz (1994 cited in Sciarini et al. 1997) studied a sample of 120 female undergraduates at Washington State University and found that 84% were attracted to hospitality management major after entering college. Most were not strongly influenced by any particular individual when selecting their major, and most aspired to become general managers or higher in their career goals.

The attitudinal problem cannot be taken lightly because “wrong” attitudes are not easy to train away – as many practitioners have been discovering. Managers can put on training courses and employees go back into their establishments with the happy effect of the training programme, but this only lasts for a short while and then what? It is suggested that more scientific and professional approaches to recruitment are needed, in particular for the frontline (Hinds et al 2004:417).

If employees do not take pride in their jobs or find dignity in what they do, they are more likely to leave the industry, and a greater concern occurs when the employees with
negative attitudes towards their job do not leave the industry, and they continue to stay and provide poor service (Miller and Madsen, 2003).

Holt (2002) emphasised that the glamour of five-star hotels and the rise of the celebrity chef will too often hide the very basic and simple nature of what hotel employees provide. With this in mind, one of the challenges facing the employees is how to balance professional competence with the humility inherent in their role. Therefore they must live in the middle of taking pride in what they do, being a professional and competent artisan, manager and business person in an increasingly-complex sector, while maintaining a traditional subservience when it comes to the demand and needs of their customers.

This issue of role conflict raises the debate of service versus servility in the hospitality industry. Servility, according to Hill (2002:254), “betrays the absence of a certain kind of self-respect”. Meanwhile customer service is not customer servitude. Great customer service is doing things above and beyond the norm; being willing and able to behave in unusual ways when faced with unusual situations; and doing them selflessly, for the sake of the customer. On the contrary being servile is quite another thing. It means seeking out options to give faux service. “Terms related to servility include sycophant, brown-noser, suck-up, and boot-licker” (Green, 2007:1).

According to Chappel (2004) the service in the hospitality industry is the meeting between the server (employee) and the served (customer). In the hotel dining-room, for example, the waiter and the guest engage in the hospitality service encounter.
Shamir (1980) emphasised this issue in his research about person-role conflicts in subordinate service roles, and asserted that; in service organisations like hotels where training literature refers to customers as Mr. King and Mrs. Queen, and in lower status service roles such as washroom attendants, it is commonly assumed that the client wishes to feel important, and the service worker is expected to "build up the client's ego" (Shamir, 1980:744). The research further revealed the issue of the conflict between role requirements and the self-esteem of the role occupant, giving examples of bus drivers who experience humiliation when they stretch their hands to collect the fare from the passengers like beggars (Shamir, 1980).

It could be claimed that people do not like the idea of giving service: in doing the best for the customer, people may find it uncomfortable in egalitarian cultures (Guerrier and Adib, 2001). In Britain, where many people still associate service with servility, the recruitment of good staff can be difficult (Holloway and Taylor, 2006). Accordingly, there is a conflict between service-role requirements and values of equality that exist in society outside the service organisation (Shamir, 1980).

2.8.3.2 Family Influence on Career Constructs

"Family members have been shown to be of considerable importance as they represent a credible information source" (Haven and Botterill, 2005:160). Student careers decisions are shaped by a mixture of experiences. Among the sampled college freshmen students at a land-grant institution in USA, two factors stood out as major career influences: experience and family/friends. The students’ own work experiences combined with their observations of the people in the occupations they were considering had a strong positive influence on career choice for the students (Sciarini et al. 1997).
Parent and families have an important influence on their children in their career choice. Lankard (1995) asserts that family influence is an important factor in preparing youngsters for their role as worker, and that young people form many of their attitudes about work and career from their interactions with family. However, level of influence and involvement of family can vary, offering both positive and negative influences (Lankard, 1995).

According to Cothran and Combrink (1999), the most influential forces in high school students’ career decision are parents and family (combined), but friends, teachers, and counselors were much less important in formatting student attitudes and career choices. Croft (1997) found that parental attitudes about the hospitality industry are often negative, and these negative assumptions are often passed to children (Cothran and Combrink, 1999).

Siann et al. (1990) emphasise on the same issue and assert that for most individuals, families are a salient part of the environment around them, and except for those who are alienated from their families, most young people make their choices by consulting their families and give some thought to the impact that their career choice may have on their families.

Specific underlying mechanisms of the influence flowing from parents to adolescents’ career constructs have recently emerged, with distinction between definer influence and model influence has been made. Definer influence (Saltile, 1985 cited in Middleton and Loughead, 1993) was described as persons with whom the adolescent had direct contact with, and the person who provides information regarding different activities associated with various occupations. Model influence (Saltile, 1985 cited in Middleton and
Loughead, 1993) was described as those people who were observed by adolescents engaging in or “modelling” different types of occupations but not characterised as having direct contact with the adolescent. Role models are an important influence on young people because they provide a more complete picture of the total lifestyle of an individual working in the profession (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 1998).

Three forms of images shape a young person’s and adult’s career choice can be identified as contracted images when individuals construct their own experiences; delegated images which are gained or acquired from other people’s experiences; and derived images which emerge from the media (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). These three images interact with each other to create the individual’s overall perceptual model of any component of the choice the young person or adult are engaging in (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). Media and TV stars provide role models for many young people where role models in high status or financially lucrative occupations are rarer. Fictional drama programmes also provide young people with an insight into the lifestyle of an individual in a particular occupation (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 1998).

The family is where a child spends his or her formative years or the family in which one was raised. So it includes stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, uncles, aunts and others who have played an active role in the individual’s development (Whiston and Keller, 2004). Considering the influence of the family within the broader social context, Schulenberg et al, (1984) mentioned that socioeconomic status (SES) of the family and the individual’s ethnicity exerted a significant influence on individuals’ vocational choices and level of occupational status. SES usually incorporates one or more of the following: paternal and maternal educational attainment, family income, and paternal
(and sometime maternal) occupational status. All of these factors, as well as such related variables as values, opportunities, and parental encouragement, serve to enhance or limit an individual's potential occupational status. For example, the educational opportunities of the father's occupation directly influence the son's education, which in turn influences the son's occupational attainment. According to Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (1998) young people who are ambitious to be engineers frequently have engineer parents or family friends.

Families with higher SES background have greater access to financial resources with which to attend college than those with lower SES background, and the college degree denotes higher occupational status in terms of both initial and subsequent jobs (Schulenberg et al., 1984). Ferry (2006) also revealed that youth in more wealthy communities appear to have more family and school support in career exploration, which results in consideration of a wider range of career options. Parents, followed by other family members, provide valuable learning experiences to youngsters through their own role models and supporting activities that assist in exploring career interests.

Bryce et al. (2007) argued that parents, regardless of SES background, want their children to do well in life. Young adolescents are still quite dependent on their parents and the family context, therefore parent-child interactions and family dynamics represent important influences on the content of early vocational preferences (Vondracek et al. 1999). According to Whiston and Keller (2004) government should be involved in this issue to encourage and expand to include a parental education programme component and inform parents and families that the industry provides
desirable management-level career, and has potential opportunities in career advancement. In relation to gender, the vocational aspirations of female junior high school students were associated with both parents' occupational levels, whereas the vocational aspirations of male students were associated with only the fathers' occupational level. Furthermore, gender interacted with social class and parental factors in determining the choice of future occupation. The researchers found that, girls from a lower SES tended to select occupations requiring less education than girls from a higher SES (Whiston and Keller, 2004).

Another variable which also influences career constructs in the family is the size of family and birth order of individuals. Researchers found that males from larger families tended to have lower educational expectations, achieved less education, and subsequently achieve lower occupational status (Whiston and Keller, 2004).

Research has also shown that lack of family involvement in the career choice process can be of influence on youth inability to make decisions (Ferry, 2006). However Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001) argue that the domain of choice is a battleground between political and social factors. It is the tensions between the rights of individuals to make choices and define their own existence, the rights of individuals to be protected from negative impacts of choice by others in society, and adjusting the balance between the rights and obligations of individuals, and the right and obligations of communities and societies.

Siann et al. (1990) noted that according to a report in the media, Muslim girls are likely to face considerable opposition, and possibly conflict, from their parents in their career choice. They also, to some extent, confirmed the same issue in their research of family
involvement on career choice with ethnic minority and ethnic majority. They found that there is little evidence that the majority of Muslim girls are likely to be hindered in their choice of career by parental restrictions.

The literature therefore revealed that the choice of education or career by young people is a decision of mixed experiences, and depends on different factors, such as parent and family, education, SES, and information about the career from different images.

2.9 Religion and Society

Society has large expectations from its organisations as well as family structures; organisations exert influences on them through various means (Tayeb, 1997). Tayeb (1997) mentioned different factors which can exert their own influences on organisation such as; political, social and economic institutions including economic structure, trade unions, social groups, the educations system, and pressure groups. He also added that there are factors which contribute to the formation and perpetuation of national culture, of which religion is a major one.

Classical social theory widely anticipated the demise of religion in the most of contemporary Europe according to Bruce (Herbert, 2003). Yet across the Mediterranean, for instance Egypt, the case is the opposite (Herbert, 2003). Although the demise of religion as a factor in public life was widely anticipated in Egypt too, since the 1960s the influence of religion has noticeably increased to the extent that its presence is visible everywhere in public space. He also added that since 1980s religion, not specifically Islam but other religions, also increased widely in many parts of the world (for example Poland, Nicaragua, Iran, India, and the United States).
According to Giddens (2006:534) sociologists define religion as a cultural system of commonly shared beliefs and rituals that provides a sense of ultimate meaning and purpose by creating an idea of reality that is sacred, all-encompassing and supernatural. Giddens (2006) noted that this definition lacks any mention of God. People often think of theism as a belief of one or more supernatural deities (Greek word for God), as basic for religion; however this is not necessarily the case. Some religions, such as Buddhism, believe in the existence of spiritual forces rather than a particular God. Kumar (1996) thinks that there are numerous definitions given by scholars according to their conceptions. The forms of which religion expresses itself vary so much that it is difficult to agree upon one definition (Kumar, 1996).

Giddens (2006) states that when sociologists study religion, they do so as sociologists and not as believers in any particular faith, and in sociology the world religion is used in a wider sense than in religious books (Kumar, 1996).

Religion has been with every people in every culture since the very beginning of human society. In traditional societies, religion usually plays a central part in social life. National culture as a set of beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, values, and all those which are relate to work and organisations are carried into the workplace as part of the employee’s cultural baggage (Tayeb, 1997).

Religious symbols and rituals are often associated with the material and artistic culture of society, such as music, painting or carving, dance, storytelling and literature (Giddens, 2006).

Religion in any society significantly interacts with other cultural institutions. It finds expression in material culture, in human behaviour, and in value system, and in value systems, moral and ethics. It interacts with the system of family organisation, marriage, economics,
psychology, law and politics. It enters into the realms of medicine (preventive and curative), science and technology and it has inspired rebellions, communal riots, wars as well as sublime works of art (rennaissance).

(Kumar, 1996:10)

Religion is a form of social practice which therefore is affected by the manner in which society is conceived and organised (Davis, 1994). Many sociologists agree that religion delivers an important and positive effect on society (Kane, 2004). Hargove (1979 in Kane, 2004) argued that even for societies that have written laws, the laws political behaviors are actually derived from religion (Tayeb, 1997).

In many countries, religions have a certain degree of influence on the cultural characteristics of their people and institutions. This influence is far more extensive and inclusive in the countries which are expressly modelled after a religious ideal (Tayeb, 1997). Islam as a religion has its obvious impact on people life and behaviour. It has proven itself capable of mobilisation as a public discourse without stifling rather contributing to democratic pluralism (Herbert, 2003).

Many Muslim countries have recently begun efforts to re-institute within their territories their own indigenous ways of running their social, educational and commercial organisations (Tayeb, 1997). For Muslims, Islam is not a man-made institution; the Quran contains the words of Allah (God), revealed syllable by syllable to Prophet Mohammed in A.D.610 (Rood, 1994), and modified through the ages in response to changes in time and place (Hitti, 1970).

For Muslims, it is necessary to strive to achieve an Islamic society, or one that meets the expectations of Allah (God). It is asserted in the Quran that humans are able to choose and intervene in their destiny, and they are responsible for the consequences of their
deeds (Tayeb, 1997). However, they are not left alone to run their life. Allah (God) has equipped them with the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Mohammed (Tayeb, 1997). The most profound impact that Islam exerts is that all people are equal before Allah; however, Islam appointed specific rights of men and women that differ. For example, men should inherit twice as much as women. In turn, men must care for and protect and support their wives, sisters, and daughters.

According to Ibrahim (2004) all religions are based on certain core principles, values, orals and precepts that specify right and wrong behaviours. Islam as a religion in people’s life has no segregations between worldly and religious aspects of life. According to Tayeb (1997) Islam is an all-encompassing creed; it governs every aspect of life, public and private, political and economic, and any aspects relevance to business activities.

Bannerman (1988) pointed out that Islam is not an actor or a factor in particular fields of activity, it is rather a framework within which activity takes place. Notwithstanding that all Muslim nations have a great deal in common, there are also differences in economic, business and social aspects of life among people (Tayeb, 1997), and the implementation of it codes varies from society to another. Religion can affect the work habit of people, and affect politics and business (Ibrahim, 2004). For example, in a country like Saudi Arabia where the Sacred law (Shari’a) is strictly adhered to in many aspects of life (Tayeb, 1997), such as they have to close all shops during the prayer time, and women have to cover their faces in front of unknown males. On the contrary, Turkey has turned to secular laws for the administration of its economic and social affairs (Tayeb, 1997).
In most Muslim countries, an obvious segregation between men and women can be noticed in prayers at Mosques, wedding ceremonies, schools, and other aspects of life. In Malaysia for example, in supermarkets, separate checkouts queues have been instituted for men and women. Iran is also another example where women have to follow a strict Islamic dress code at work and elsewhere (Tayeb, 1997). Therefore, it could be said that for Muslim countries it is not easy to isolate or segregate the effect of Islam on Muslim lives, which in turn affects other socio-cultural institutions, such as education, and political factors government economic and industrial policies.

2.9.1 Muslim Perspectives of Working in the Hotel Industry

Islam as a religion is always encouraging its people to be hospitable and generous with others. The Messenger of Allah Prophet Mohamed (Peace Be upon Him) further guides Muslims by saying: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be hospitable with his or her guests".

Islam wants his people to show gratitude and be kind and happy when receiving guest and be generous with them.

Hospitality is a feeling common to many Asiatic nations and enjoined by the religion of Mohammed (Islam); and Persia a very extensive exercise of its duty may unquestionably be remarked, not only among the tribes and peasantry, but also in town and cities

(Fraser, 1863:277).

From the Islamic perspective, working in the hotel industry is considered to be a lawful job as discussed by Muslim scholars, if it is undertaken within the Islamic context, and far from unlawful (Haram) activities. According to Al-Mubarak (2008:1) "the essential
business of a hotel is that of providing rooms for people to lodge in. Since the hotel business is a lawful business, it follows that working in or running a hotel is lawful (Halal) work”.

The problem lies in the fact that most hotels, even in the vast majority of Muslim countries, are involved in some un-Islamic transactions. Most hotels have restaurants that have pork and alcohol on the menu which according to Islam is unlawful food. Hotels also provide room service that offers alcoholic drinks, among its different lawful food and drink options, to the guests in their rooms. Many hotels even provide a stocked bar in some of the executive rooms. Then there are some hotels which provide live entertainment, such as gambling and discos (Al-Mubarak, 2008).

According to Shahir (2005), in Islam, whatever income is deemed to be unlawful or non-permissible is prohibited from being used to feed the family. It is said that the “flesh that grows out of non-permissible income is destined for hell’s fire”. Therefore most Muslims are concerned about the source of income they get to feed themselves and their families.

According to Sunnah hadith, working directly in the distribution of alcoholic liquor is unlawful work. According to Anas Ibn Malik Narrated that Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be upon Him) said:

Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him) cursed ten people in connection with wine: the wine-presser, the one who has it pressed, the one who drinks it, the one who conveys it, the one to whom it is conveyed, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who benefits from the price paid for it, the one who buys it, and the one for whom it is bought.
Since alcohol is considered to be unlawful liquor, and serving it is also considered unlawful, some employees have concerns about working in hotels based on this Islamic doctrine.

Fleishman and El-Hennawy (2007), assert that Muslims employed at Egypt's racy resorts believe that God (Allah) blesses the working man. They hope that God (Allah) will also forgive them for what they see when Westerners visit. They also pointed out from their interviews with resort employees that many of the employees felt that the job they were doing was considered to be unlawful. The employees feel it was wrong to serve liquor because they are Muslims.

As Muslim countries are aware of all the issues related to Muslim laws and religious needs, a potential growth market of Islamic hotel branding, family travel and Muslim tourism will soon become a new phenomenon in the booming GCC countries, and once a few properties are established, their traffic and popularity will increase (Javed, 2007). The new trend of Islamic hotels has spread in some of the countries in the Middle East. According to Kola (2008), Islamic hotel brands are springing up in the UAE and the Middle East. “Some of the key features of an Islamic hotel, or Shariah-compliant hotel, include serving of lawful (halal) food, and women staff attired in dresses and outfit that comply with the Muslim culture” (Kola, 2008:1) Also, no alcohol is sold in the hotel nor are guests allowed to bring in to the hotel.

Adapting to this kind of hotel in Arab and Muslim countries could encourage locals to work in hotels, and the hospitality industry as a career may become more attractive to hospitality graduates if their opportunities to enter the labour market are constrained by
Islamic doctrines, as the Islamic hotels are compliant with such laws and religious needs.

2.9.2 Muslim Women in the Hotel Industry

Whilst there is some literature on women’s employment in the hospitality industry in the Middle East, in general, there is no literature available on women’s employment in the hospitality industry in Oman. In Oman, a country under Arabic Islamic rules, there is nothing according to the Islamic religion, which prohibits women’s employment in any sector. Therefore, women can be found at many levels and in various sectors of the economy. Woman have positions in top political positions in Oman as ministers, ambassadors, in State Council (Majlis A’Dawla), and in Consultation Council (Majlis A’Shura), and also occupy different positions as bank officials, secretaries, nurses, junior accountants, and receptionists.

With the ever-increasing levels of education in the Sultanate and expanded public access, the basis for noticeable extensive changes in the status of women is being established. There are certain professional jobs for Omani women, especially medicine, pharmacy, teaching, nursing, and the social sciences, which are stereotyped as women’s fields. However, women may be less likely to enter sales work or even clerical work, as these jobs require more contact with outsiders (Haddad and Esposito, 1998).

From the Islamic perceptive, female employment in general and in hotels is not forbidden, as long it is within Islamic and cultural morals. According to the Muslim scholar Al Obaikan (2008 cited in Al-Hakeem, 2008:1).

*We cannot see any religious scriptures that forbid women from being engaged in duty together with men at work places. Islam permits women*
However Islam bans such mixing if it involves any seduction (Al-Hakeem, 2008). The issues about employment in the hospitality industry in this respect relate to the working conditions in the hotels, night shifts which do not fit with the prevailing Islamic norms and society traditions and culture, and which might conflict with domestic female roles if a woman is married, which in turn might cause a conflict between the two roles, working in and outside the house. It might also affect the woman’s reputation in the society and affect her married life.

Another issue is that some job positions in hotels require women to travel out of the country alone for training courses or for business purposes. Although Omani laws do not prohibit women from travelling abroad, women’s freedom of movement is restricted however in that the law requires a woman to have the permission of a male family member, such as her husband or father, in order to travel outside the country (Deeb, 2005). In Islam, a woman travelling alone is prohibited according to the hadeeth was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "No woman should travel except with a mahram, and no man should enter upon a woman unless there is a mahram (member of family, such as her husband or father or brother) with her”.

The dress of women at work is another issue to be considered in relation to women’s employment. According to Shamir (1980), Gilbert et al (1998) and Nickson (2007), the appearance of the worker is an important issue in the service sector and the importance placed on appearance which focuses attention on people as sexual beings is one of the reasons which makes the hospitality industry particularly susceptible to incidents of
sexual harassment (Gilbert et al, 1998). Sexual harassment can be defined as “women-unfriendly behaviours” (Chamberlain et al, 2008: 264), these behaviours includes sexist but nonsexual comments and gestures (Kauppinen-Toropainen and Gruber, 1993 cited in Chamberlain et al, 2008). These unfriendly behaviours can be identified to eleven types of sexual harassment according to Guber (1992 cited in Chamberlain et al, 2008:264) in three domains: verbal requests (ranging from subtle expressions to promises and threats), sexual remarks (ranging from jokes to solicitation) and nonverbal displays (ranging from gestures and pictures to forced sex).

Unlike Islamic feminist arguments, which would focus only on the empowering nature of the veil, as if the presence or absence of the veil set the rules of male-female relations within society, Islamic womanists accept the notion that women are also sexual beings. They argue, for example, that a woman may also become physically attracted to a male’s appearance and that a pious man, no less than a woman, should be humble in his appearance and wear a beard as a sign of religiosity.

(Waugh and Wannas, 2003:31)

In Oman there are no certain rules with regards to women’s dress, however, according to Islam, women’s dress must include a veil and they should cover their entire bodies except for the hands and the faces. The relevant verse (33:56) of The Noble Qur’an states:

O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not be annoyed. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Women should not wear any clothes that show the sexual attributes of their bodies like clothes which are too tight or short (Ibrahim, 2004).
Muslim women are required to cover their entire bodies except for the hands and the faces and not to reveal their adornment except to their husband, fathers, husband's fathers, sons, husbands' sons, brothers, brother's sons, sister's sons, sisters in Islam, female slaves, old male servants and small children

(The Noble Qur'an 24:31).

In Islamic society as Egyptian society for example, the issue of veiling (hejab) has become increasingly prominent because of the upsurge in women's adoption of more traditional Islamic dress codes (Ibrahim et al, 2007). In Egyptian travel agencies, according to Ibrahim et al (2007), many employers refuse to employ veiled women especially in departments which involve direct contact with clients. In South Asia according to Stodolska and Livengood, (2006) Muslim girls were constrained in their leisure pursuits by their parental approval, strict dress codes, inadequate availability of single-sex facilities, and their religious beliefs.

Therefore many conservative families in Oman do not like their female children working in the hospitality industry as they have to wear a uniform which does not conform to Islamic dress requirements, especially if they work in reception or other front-line departments, and if they have to stay late or work night shifts.

Many of these Islamic principles and religious needs pose significant challenges for the hospitality industry as a potential employer and the negative images associated with employment in the sector do little to address such challenges.

2.10 Image of Hospitality Careers

In previous sections, different issues related to hospitality industry have been discussed. The industry is known for its low pay, long working hours, poor working conditions,
limited career progression, low job security, high labour turnover and low retention. The industry also focuses on the aesthetic and emotional labour sometimes more than the other skills which tend to be sexualised in some literature; this affects the worker identities and makes the job in the industry very stressful.

These issues all together portray the image of the industry and depict it as an unattractive industry for a lifetime career but more as a temporary job until a better job is available. Therefore it could be said that image is a major factor in effective recruitment for the hospitality industry (Brien, 2004). In the late 1990s, in UK, the industry image was being portrayed not only in the literature, but also in the television. The BBC 'reality TV series' Hotel showed various hotels, hotel activities and working conditions, building an industry image that many may have enjoyed, while others thought negative (Brien, 2004).

The hospitality student is an easy target to research and potentially biased, since they have already made the decision to enter the industry, therefore one assumes that their image about the industry and what it offered was positive. But unfortunately, research highlights the low retention rate of graduates shortly after they enter the industry as full-time employees—potentially the outcome of the reality of industry and image setting in (Barron and Maxwell, 1993). Cordova (1993) asserted that young people have not been exposed to the diversity, excitement, and countless opportunities for success in the business world that industry holds. While young people are the main slice of society that needs to be prepared to enter the hospitality labour market, according to Cordova (1993) the hospitality industry generally does not have a favourable image with young people.
Research on employees' within the industry is also common, particularly, with regard to human resource issues, e.g. job satisfaction/perceptions, which holistically builds a picture of their image of the industry (Tepeci and Bartlett, 2002). From the 1990s onwards, research regarding industry image divided into two sections: hospitality student’ image and ‘in-industry’ employee perceptions of the industry (Brien, 2004).

The negative perceptions many service employee have of their jobs is one of possible phenomenon hindering the success of the hospitality industry, as many front-line service employees often feel their work is insulting, demeaning, and humiliating as they cater to the needs and sometimes eccentric wants of customers (Miller and Madsen, 2003).


While many employment opportunities for college students exist within the hospitality industry, the industry faces a pervasive image problem. A commonly held public belief considers hospitality jobs to be low-paying and lacking career advancement potential. This was vividly expressed in the recent movie, “Reality Bites” (Popular among the age-group participating in the study).

In the UK, the hospitality industry image is being damaged by drink and drugs, according to a Caterersearch (2007) online poll of nearly 300 hospitality professionals, 89% felt alcohol and drug misuse was a problem in the industry, with 39% of those believing it was "widespread". The overwhelming majority (85%) felt that alcohol and drug misuse was having a negative impact on the image of the industry.

Although the industry has its glamour image in terms of work in airlines, tour guiding, and the heritage sector, the image of the tourism sector is determined by the lowest common denominator so that tourism is labelled with the image of routine, hospitality work in the hotels and restaurants (Pender and Sharpley, 2005).
Different TV programmes in GCC showed the image of the hospitality industry as perceived from the oriental society perceptive. Hayer-Tayer is a comedy programme produced by Abu Dhabi TV, which talks about different issues in society and the image of the hospitality industry was one of the issues represented. The programme showed negative images of the industry. The programme expressed two different issues. The first issue concerned females working in hotels which was objected to by their families.

The second issue was the link between local employees working in the organisation managed by expatriates and the chance of learning and promotion (Hayer Tayer, 2006). The issue that the senior expatriate managers do not allow the locals to learn from them, as junior locals might take their positions. A similar programme underlining the negative image of the hospitality industry:

the nation has been subjected to 'fly on the wall' TV documentaries which have featured everything from the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool to the working practices of Chef Gordon Ramsay. These programmes showed the industry in a negative, albeit mostly realistic, light. On the other hand, Jamie, Gary and Ainsley have taken hospitality (cooking) to the dinner table in British households. I was recently confronted by an 18-year-old family friend who, attracted by the latter programmes, worked for six months as a commis Chef in one of the large international hotels but has now chosen a different career path describing his kitchen experience as slave labour, too many hours and insufficient pay

(Egberts, 2002:1).

2.11 Summary
To summarise, HR is an essential factor in any organisations generally and in hotels specifically. Managing HR in any organisation cannot be accomplished without understanding the main functions of HRM which are: human resource planning; recruitment and selection; human resource development; compensation and benefits; safety and health; employee and labour relations; human resource research.
In a service industry, such as the hospitality industry, the human element plays a major role in the overall success of the organisation. The industry offers plenty of job opportunities at different levels. However, jobs in the hospitality industry are considered to be globally low, which makes it difficult to develop them as careers, and this has resulted that the industry suffering from skill shortages. Skills shortages could be due to various reasons, such as: educational level of its employees; the reputation of the industry as an unattractive industry for graduate students; the educational system in the hospitality institutions. In Oman, this issue of skills shortages is evident in the industry in terms of its associations to other issues such as religions, cultural values and societal attitudes towards the hotel industry. As a result, the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel industry in line with choosing tourism as a vehicle for the diversification of Omani economy makes it of complex issue.

It was revealed from the literature that in order to recruit successfully (Boella, 1992; Goldsmith et al, 1997) it is important to understand the labour market and to decide if the organisation is going to recruit internally or externally. One of the methods employers use to fill the job vacancies in their organisations is recruiting expatriates. Thus the industry is being described as a heterogeneous industry. The other side of the coin for employing expatriate could be worse than just filling the skills gaps by expatriates. Its impact can not be ignored, it could extend to affect the countries cultures, national stability of the country, and the economical impact of the outflow of compensation paid to employees.

It is essential to discuss the most important issues faced by the hospitality industry and its employers in order to aid them and improve the hospitality jobs. Recruitment and
selection of the employees in the industry is one of the issues challenging the employers where they want to recruit the right person for the right job on one hand, whilst they want to minimise the cost by recruiting unqualified employees on the other. In the recruitment and selection process employers place high importance on aesthetic labour in terms of the ability of their employee to look good and sound right. They also focus on the emotional labour, and how employees should control their emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear or display certain emotions such as smiling or joy. These emotions could be positively associated with work stress, and affect the workers identities. Therefore, it could be said that, although these concepts help to ensure that employees fit in the organisation in terms of how they look and how they sound. But it is important to consider that these concepts might affect employee’s inner-self in terms of their cultural values and religious beliefs, and force them to provide more than a physical work. This will affect workers identity, how they relate to the job and therefore how they perform their work.

It was also discovered from the literature that the industry is know for its high labour turnover and low retention which correlated with another issues such as, low wages, poor working condition, lack of training which considered in some organisation as an expensive investment in the employees, lack of career progression, and lack of job continuity and job security. Whilst these issues are evident in the global industry, the problems are compounded in Oman. The differences between public and private sectors working conditions resulted that people prefer working in the public sector rather than the private sector. Public sector offers better pay, less working hours, secure job and guarantee of job continuity, whereas private sector requires long, unsocial working hours, low remuneration and lack of job continuity and job security.
The attitude towards the hospitality jobs is another issue facing the industry. The literature revealed that people have negative attitudes towards the industry as a service industry, and that some employees have negative attitudes towards their job, and they are not taking pride of what they do, which result in poor service. This conflict in the role could be referred to concepts of service and servility.

It has been illustrated in the literature that the construct of career is affected by different factors such as parent and family. There are also three forms of images which shape a young person’s and adult’s career choice. These images can be identified as; contracted images, delegated images, and derived images (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). It is essential therefore for decision makers to give this issue a high consideration. In a tribe/family oriented societies such as Omani society, it is important to understand that the choice of career is not an individual decision; it is rather a shared decision made by different parties for one person. The understanding of this issue will help the government, and the industry to unite their efforts to change the image of the industry and portray in better image. This in turn will help change the society attitude towards the hotel industry, as well as will attract individuals work in the hotel industry.

Society and religion has their influence on people behaviours and shapes their lives as revealed from the literature. It could be said that in traditional societies religion plays a major role in social life. Islam has its influence on people behaviours, and it governs every aspect of their life. This could explain how in some Muslim countries people refrain from working in the hospitality industry due to the activities which are according to Islam considered unlawful such as; serving pork and alcohol, gambling and providing rooms for unmarried couples. Muslims are also concerned about the source of income of their work, and believe that since hotels deal with unlawful activities, so their source of
income from working in hotels is also unlawful. These issue demonstrate how and why religions notably Islam, and societies, particularly Omani society influence individuals’ behaviours which impact on their choice of career, and how this creates a problem in terms of choosing tourism as a vehicle for diversification of the Omani economy in the context of the Omanisation Plan.

All of these issues shape the image of the industry and have embodied the industry as an unattractive industry to work in.
CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXTUALISING THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide the reader with basic information about the Sultanate of Oman in terms of geographical location, population, and its topography. Omani community and its people is also one of the important elements will be addressed in this chapter. The chapter then provides information about the country after 1970 when His Majesty the Sultan Qaboos came to power, the subsequent changes to the Omani economy and the development of the Omanisation Plan. As part of this, the chapter also explores tourism development in the Sultanate of Oman. Before turning to talk about the Omanisation Plan, the chapter will highlight employment and its legislations in the public and private sectors. Omanisation is one of the most important issues regarding human resource planning occupies the attention of the government of the Sultanate of Oman in recent years. Initiatives are under way to increase the number of Omanis in the public sector and to make the private sector more appealing as a career option for Omani nationals. This chapter will explore the government’s plans for the Omanisation of the economy and workforce generally. The chapter also will focus on the indicators of implementation of Omanisation plan in tourism and hotel sector specifically.

3.2 Oman Context

3.2.1 Geographical Location

The Sultanate of Oman is the oldest independent state in the Gulf region, founded in 1650 after its independence from Portugal in 1650 (FCO, 2006), and located on the
South-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea and its land borders are with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Ministry of Information, 2007) (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Map of the Sultanate of Oman

3.2.2 Climate and Topography

Oman covers an area of 309,500 sq. km (Ministry of Information, 2006), including a vast central area which features rocks, gravel plains, desert and sand dunes. It is the second largest country in the Arabian Peninsula.

Oman’s topography attracts a large number of tourists; the Sultanate has a diversity of topographical features including the coastal plain, which is the most important area representing about 3% of the total land area (OWT, 2008).

The mountains cover approximately 15%, and the main mountain range is the 10,000 foot Al Hajar (OWT, 2008), which runs from Ru’us al Jibal at Ras Musandam in the north (flanked by the Strait of Hormuz, the gateway to the Gulf) to the Arabian Peninsula’s south-eastern extremity at Ras al Hadd on the Indian Ocean. This range, which takes the form of a great arc, is 3,000 metres high at its highest point in the Jabal al Akhdhar (Ministry of Information, 2007). Sands and Deserts occupy the remaining area includes two large sand deserts the Wahiba Sands (known as Rimal Al Wahiba) and part of the Empty Quarter (Rub Al Khali) (OTW, 2008).

The country’s climate, like its topography, is diverse with humid coastal areas and a hot, dry desert interior. Its highest mountains, at just over 3,000 metres, enjoy a moderate climate all year round. Although rainfall is generally light and irregular, the southern Dhofar province catches the Indian Ocean monsoon (Khareef) rains, which fall between May and September and “turns Dhofar into a lush, green paradise that draws thousands of Arab tourists fleeing Arabia’s stifling summer heat to Oman every year” (Ministry of Information, 2002:7).
3.2.3 Population, Religion and Language

The Omani government's population census figures of 2004 reported the total Sultanate's population at 2.416 million. Of this, 1.803 million was estimated to be Omani about 74.6% of the total. The other 25.4% refers to the number of expatriates in Oman. These include Western businessmen, as well as government advisers, army officers, and workers from the Indian subcontinent, the Philippines, and other Asian countries (Ministry of National Economy, 2004).

Oman's population is growing rapidly. It is expected to double to over three million by 2010 and is on course to exceed five million by 2030. Moreover, over 35% of Oman's population is aged 15 or under. According to economic trends in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Oman is experiencing the second highest rate of growth of young people between 15 and 24 years (OER, 2003). According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the age group from 0-14 years represents 42.7% of the total population, whilst these between 15-64 years represent 54.6%. Meanwhile the age group of 65 years and over represents only 2.7% of the total population (CIA, 2008).

Islam is the official religion, although other religions are tolerated under the country's Basic Law. Muslims make up 86% of the population. Three-quarters of the Muslims are Ibadis, a minority sect dating from the 8th century. Most of the remainder adhere to Sunni Islam and the rest to Shia Islam. Indian Hindus account for 13% of the population. There are also small numbers of non-Omani Christians (Arabic German Consulting, 2007).

Islam has a great impact on most Omanis' lives and practices, Sharia law is the law of Oman. The Sharia principles are contained in the Qur'an and the prophet's saying and
practices which are the second fundamental source of Islamic law after the Qur'an (Abdulali, 1990).

Arabic is the official language of Oman. Other than Arabic, English and a number of Asian languages including Hindi, Urdu, and Baluchi are also widely spoken. Swahili is also spoken by some, a legacy of Oman’s former East African presence. A number of South Asian languages are also spoken (Library of Congress, 2007). Although the Omani dialect generally is close to modern standard Arabic, coastal dialects employ a number of loanwords from Baluchi, Persian, Urdu and Gujarati (two Indo-Aryan languages), and even Portuguese. The mountain peoples of Dhofar, as well as several small nomadic groups in the desert between Dhofar and northern Oman, speak a variety of unique South Arabian languages that are not mutually intelligible with modern Arabic.

3.2.4 People of Oman

Omanis are a conservative people, and a respect to their privacy and their religion are courteous gestures from any visitors to their country (Darke and Shields, 2006). Islam is heavily influences Omani culture (MCC, 2007). Other than Islam, further factor influencing people’s attitude and shaping their behaviours, is the tribal structure which continues to play an essential role in the lives of Omani people. Most people in the Gulf States bear a tribal name rather than a family name. The hierarchy of the tribe still plays a major role even in contemporary Oman. Along with Islam and the tribe, the family occupies a central place in social and organizational life in Oman. Thus, “the tribe and the family are the second top authorities after Islam in formulating the culture of the country and organizations to a great extent” (Al-Hamadi et al, 2007:102).
While most northern Omanis share a common Arab, Muslim, and tribal culture, the people of Dhofar remain culturally distinct and often feel culturally closer to neighbouring regions in Yemen to the west (Dawn and Peterson, 2001). According to Darke and Shields (2006) Dhofar is in many respects a separate country to Oman in terms of its differences in climate, people, customs and traditions.

The people in Oman trust in tribal values, such as honor, bravery, loyalty and equality (MCC, 2007). The family in Oman is very important to most Omanis. All adult expect to marry and have children. They look forward to enjoying large family gathering, such as wedding. They also expect to rely on relatives to help them with child care, in business, or in times of trouble. In return they are willing to help family members whenever they can (MCC, 2007).

Omani culture places a high importance on family and tribal connections. The family and tribe play a major role and highly influential in shaping a person’s values and behaviour. The tribe and family have a very noticeable influence on person career development (Jodie and Gorrill, 2004).

3.3 Oman After 1970

Oman's ancient civilisation dates back at least 5,000 years when it was inhabited originally by fishing communities and hunter-gatherer societies. Archaeological digs continue to uncover and explore sites that shed light on the country's ancient history (Ministry of Information, 2002).

The country has been known by various names over the course of its history, the best-known being Majan, Mezoun and Oman (Ministry of Information, 2005). Sumerian
tablets refer to a country called Majan, thought to allude to Oman’s ancient copper mines (Ministry of Information, 2002). Mazoun is derived from the word “Muzn”, which means clouds and abundant flowing water as compared to other Arab countries (Ministry of Information, 2005:71). While Oman is believed to originate from the Arab tribes who migrated to its territory from the Uman region of Yemen, others say it owes its name to Oman bin Ibrahim al Khalil- the prophet Abraham (Ministry of Information, 2005). Oman’s rich and ancient history as a trading empire have recently driven growth within the Omani tourism economy as visitors come to see Oman’s archaeological treasures, the country’s rich history, and enjoy its rich natural beauty and wildlife (PKF, 2001).

Oman was known as Sultanate Muscat and Oman until July 1970 when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos came to power (Barrault, 2006). At that time there were no roads, one hospital, just a few schools (three for the whole country) and no means of communication with the outside world. Until 1970 the country’s regulations were very restrictive in that those who left the country were hardly ever allowed to return home. Oman’s economy was characterised by a workforce largely employed in agriculture and with a very low per capital income. All this changed dramatically with the assumption of power by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed on July 23, 1970 (Ministry of National Economy, 2003). Until his accession, the country had been resistant to modernisation, and had received little investment in infrastructure.

In 1970 and on the only radio station that existed at that time in the country, Sultan Qaboos gave his first speech, promising to give his people the necessary means to educate themselves, to help them take part in the march towards the industrialised world
and to make them proud to be Omani again. The oil revenues helped the country to prosper quickly. Schools were opened all over the country, roads and hospitals were constructed and people were provided with both jobs and houses. Today Oman is considered to be one of the Gulf's industrialised countries (Barrault, 2006).

Through consecutive Five-Year plans which started in 1976, the country has achieved noticeable progress on both the economic and social fronts in a relatively short period of time. These plans allowed Oman to build its economy, based on diversification and on development projects in each region of the country to help stop the migration of the population to the cities. Nevertheless, after nearly three decades of intensive development efforts for the different sectors, Oman is at a crossroads, confronting a host of challenges stemming mainly from the fact that the economy is still reliant on oil. To face this challenge, the government has initiated a structural adjustment process aimed at laying down a solid foundation for a diversified economic base led by the private sector (Ministry of National Economy, 2003).

3.4 The Government and State Institutions

The Sultanate of Oman is divided into eight administrative divisions of which four are called Governorates Muscat, Dhofar, Musandam and Buraimi (Ministry of Information, 2007), and the other five are called Regions: Al Batinah, Ash Sharqiyah - Ad Dakhliyah - Adh Dhahirah - and Al Wusta). Each administrative division is divided into sub-divisions called Wilayats. They comprise a total of 61 Wilayats (Ministry of Information, 2006). The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for overseeing the governorates of Musandam and Buraimi and the regions. The governors of Musandam and Buraimi, as well as the walis (leaders) of the wilayats – one wali per wilayat – are
responsible for matters of local administration and act as a link between the
government, its regional institutions and members of the public (Ministry of
Information, 2007).

By July 1975, Sultan Qaboos had endorsed a Royal Decree 26/75; introducing laws to
regulate the administration in a way he hoped would meet existing and future
requirements. The decree set out the Council of Ministers and other governmental
bodies’ powers and responsibilities in conjunction with the Civil Service law of Royal
Decree 27/75 which outlines civil service rights and duties (Ministry of Information,
2006).

A Royal Decree 26/75 was the early forerunner of The Basic Law of the State,
promulgated on 6th, November, 1996 which comprises 81 articles, laying down the
legal framework governing the functions of the different authorities and separating their
powers, while defining the principles and scope of their functions. This document also
sets out Oman’s system of government and the guiding principles behind the state’s
policies in various fields, and details public rights and duties. It also contains specific
provisions covering the Head of State, the Council of Ministers and Judiciary, and
includes references to the specialist councils, financial affairs and the Council of Oman
(Ministry of Information, 2005).

The Council of Oman (Majlis Oman), set up under Article 58 of the Basic Law of the
State, is made up of the members of the State Council (Majlis A’Dawla) and the
Consultation Council (Majlis A’Shura). It meets at the invitation of Sultan Qaboos to
study and discuss matters raised by him and takes its decisions by majority vote. At the
annual meeting of the Council of Oman, which marks the start of the annual sessions of
the State Council and the Consultation Council, His Majesty gives a wide-ranging speech which identifies the course and priorities for national action and sets out guidelines for the state’s institutions (Ministry of information, 2006).

3.5 Woman’s Contribution to the Development of Oman

Much emphasis from the government of the Sultanate is placed on the role of women. Over the years, Oman, represented by Sultan Qaboos, has opened up all areas of opportunities to Omani women. From the early years of Sultan Qaboos’ reign, great importance was attached to the education and training of Omani women ensuring that they would contribute to their country’s development, alongside their male counterparts. According to the U.S Department of State (2001), Omani women have made gains in the work-force. Some educated women have attained positions of authority in government, business, and the media. High-ranking females in Oman include: the first female minister in the Gulf region; the Minister of Higher Education, Tourism, and Social Development, and the President of the Public Authority for Craft Industries a position which carries with it the rank of minister (Ministry of Information, 2006).

Omani women were the first in the Gulf region to win the rights of candidacy and vote (Albelushi, 2004). There have been women in the State Council (Majlis A’Dawla) ever since it was first established, and women have had the right to stand as candidates for the Consultation Council (Majlis A’Shura) for several years. They also occupy numerous other senior posts in the administrative apparatus of state, including positions as ministry undersecretaries, Ambassadors, Cultural Attachés. They are also chairpersons of boards of directors, board member of the Oman Champers of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), the businessmen’s Council, Muscat’s Municipal
Council and many other vital bodies that contribute to the smooth running of the country (Ministry of Information, 2006).

Although the female’s main role is still generally viewed as domestic, the key factor underlying the change in women’s status and roles in Omani society is the advent of universal education (Al-Ghafri, 1996). In Oman, equal education opportunities are provided to both females and males, starting with entry to primary education and going on to preparatory, secondary and higher education. Before 1970, there were no schools for girls. However, girls in government schools now make up 48.65% of the student population (Ministry of National Economy, 2005). In Oman, government grants for study abroad are generally divided evenly between men and women (U.S. Department of State, 2001).

High fertility rates among locals, and the increasing participation of women in the labour force resulted in growing unemployment among national populations. According to Elnaggar (2007) the percentage of Omani females working in the public sector is 31%, while the percentage of those working in the private sector is 17.9%, and self-employed Omani females make 2% which comprises less than 1% of Omani employers. All of these reasons forced governments to re-evaluate their labour policies. Monetary and fiscal policies have also been reviewed in the light of rising inflation and the weakening of the dollar in some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states (Shochat, 2008).

With ever-increasing levels of education in the Sultanate and expanded public access, the basis for noticeable extensive changes in the status of women is being established. There are certain professional jobs for Omani women, especially medicine, pharmacy,
teaching, nursing, and the social sciences, which are stereotyped as women’s fields. However, women may be less likely to enter sales work or even clerical work, as these jobs require more contact with outsiders (Haddad and Esposito, 1998).

3.6 The Omani Economy

Since the 1960s, oil has been the single most important commodity in the GCC region, accounting for 77.7 per cent of total exports, 83.1 percent of government revenue, and 50% of total GDP in 2006 (IIF 2008b cited in Shochat, 2008).

In May 1981, the states—Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—formed the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf, better known as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (Shochat, 2008).

The GCC oil future looks bright according to the expected rise in the demand for oil by 34 million barrels a day (OPEC, 2007), with a predictable average annual global economic growth rate of 3.5% between 2005 and 2030 (on a purchasing power parity basis). Yet the opportunity presented by the recent increase in oil prices could serve as an obstacle to change, as it did through the 1980s and much of the 1990s. Following the oil depression of the late 1980s, GCC governments realised the danger of a heavy dependence on oil in a highly-volatile market, and initiated plans to diversify their economies (Shochat, 2008).

Since then ‘economic diversification’ has been the catchphrase of economic policy in the GCC countries. It was first prompted by concerns about the finite nature of oil and recognition of the risks of economic instability inherent in heavy dependence on oil exports. Therefore the economic diversification—the expansion of non-oil economic
sectors—was seen as the solution. Other reasons are also important for the country economy; rapid population growth (section 3.2.3), primarily due to an influx of migrant workers; the number of foreign workers in Oman increased by 34% in 2000 as compared with the previous year (Jureidini, 2003).

To activate economic diversification, the GCC states had to implement structural reforms in four key areas: reducing the size of the public sector as the main driver of the economy; reducing the heavy reliance on expatriate labour; improving the performance of financial markets and the efficiency of monetary and fiscal policies; building human capital through investment in training and education (Shochat, 2008).

Oman's government is also well aware that it needs to diversify the economy and to lessen its reliance on oil, which comprises 41% of the total GDP in 1996 (Ministry of Information, 2004). The Vision 2020 Conference, which was held in Muscat in June 1995, called for a number of adjustments; including the reinforcement of the economic and financial stability of the country, reshaping the role of the government and privatising the public sector; including tourism, globalisation of the Omani economy and upgrading the skills of the Omani workforce. Within Oman, unemployment amongst young educated people is already a problem.

Many young people have been educated, but the government sector with bloated public employment can no longer guarantee them jobs, and employers in the private sector continue to report difficulty in locating educated workers with requisite skills

Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

One of the main policy areas of the Vision 2020 is the development of human resources, and upgrading of Omani skills and competences to keep abreast with the technological progress, to meet the demands of a knowledge-based economy and of increasing globalisation, has been and will continue to be a policy area of highest importance in Oman's development planning (Ministry of National Economy, 2005a).

One of the government priorities is to create employment opportunities for the increasing number of school leavers (Ministry of National Economy, 2004). Considering the current dependence on oil revenue to finance government development projects, and realising that oil is a finite resource, the government has adopted a long-term development plan (Vision 2020), to diversify the economy and depend on generating income sources other than oil, such as manufacturing and tourism.

The challenge currently facing Oman is the development of a competent and effective Omani workforce, with limited dependence on expatriate expertise. In 1995 'Vision 2020 for Oman's Economy' was launched, with a key focus on two areas: economic diversification in order to reduce oil's domination of the economy, so that the oil sector contribution to GDP be decreased from 41% in 1996 to about 9% in 2020 (Ministry of Information, 2004); and the policy of 'Omanisation', the replacement of migrant workers with Omani nationals. This policy underpins education, training and employment policies and practice (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

As with a number of Gulf States, Oman's economy is dependent on a proportion of non-Omani labour. Given the Sultanate's rapidly-growing indigenous population and high dependency ratio on expatriate workers, the government has adopted a vigorous policy to increase the proportion of Omanis in the labour force across many sectors (Ministry
of National Economy, 1997). This policy focuses on the process of Omanisation in all sectors and encourages Omani youths to seek employment opportunities within the private sector. The labour market in Oman suffers from two main problems: the first problem is the presence of a large expatriate working community reaching about half a million; and the second problem is the increasing number of unemployed Omanis, with the range of social, political and economic problems that usually accompany unemployment. This paradox has been the driving force behind accelerating the Omanisation process (Ministry of Tourism, 2002).

3.7 Education and Training in Oman

Education is considered to be one of the most important factors for building human capital and country development. The government of the Sultanate of Oman has paid Omani citizens every attention and care in different fields since the early days of Oman’s modern renaissance in 1970. When His Majesty Sultan Qaboos acceded to the throne in 1970, there were only three schools in the Sultanate. The priorities, therefore, were to expand educational provision to all parts of the country and to ensure that all sections of society had equal access to education (Ministry of Education, 2004). The Ministry of Education since then has shaped its educational policies according to the speeches of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed who has given education the top priority in building a modern state (Ministry of Education, 1996). Improvement in education, leads to accelerating economic and social growth and promotion of living standards through raising per capital income, motivating people to work and production and encouraging their skills for creation and invention (Ministry of National Economy, 2006).
Education has always received the greatest attention from the Sultanate’s government. The progress achieved in this sector is something Oman is particularly proud of and one that has been called as outstanding by several world organisations. With only one public university in the country (Sultan Qaboos University) and no plans for a second one, the pressure on the government to accommodate high school graduates into government higher education institutions (GHEIs), has been immense. For its part, the government has made every effort to provide higher education facilities that would meet the growing demands of the labour market for trained and qualified Omanis (Al-Mandhari, 2004b).

Oman’s Vision 2020 pursues the building of an education system that will achieve equitable opportunities for all citizens. This is accomplished by a system characterized by cost-effectiveness which responds and conforms to labour market needs. A number of policies and strategies were formulated for enhancing education levels through upgrading basic education, building a university, and ensuring technical and vocational education has a strong base of basic and secondary education which works towards satisfying the renewable needs of professions and technical skills for the labour market (Ministry of National Economy, 2006).

The overall aim of all the efforts by the government and the Ministry of Education and all other institutions providing education or training is to ensure that all young people in the Sultanate of Oman have access to a quality school education system appropriate to the needs of the 21st century’s globalised world.

Although, an increasing number of Omani females are entering various careers that were considered unsuitable in the past; including those within the government, industrial and service sectors, specific careers are being favoured by families. For instance teaching, and
especially medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and the social sciences, continue to be favoured options. Family pressure and social traditions are powerful reasons driving Omani females into teaching, but these are not the only reasons. Extrinsic factors, such as immediate placement and attractive work conditions, including the salary and long holidays, are crucial reasons why women become teachers in Oman (Albelushi, 2004).

3.8 Tourism and Hospitality Development in Oman

It could be argued that Oman probably is one of the most diverse tourism destinations in the Middle East region (PIL, 2002:1). It is ranked fourth in the region in terms of cultural and natural attractions after Egypt, Jordan, and Iran (PKF, 2000:29). The country is rich in tourist attractions, such as: castles, forts, museums, archeological sites, mosques and natural wonders (Ministry of Tourism, 2006). Besides the economic importance of tourism and its requirement for transportation and telecommunication infrastructure developments, the development of the industry has had great importance to enhanced communication between individuals and groups within the same country and between people from different countries, and it also contributes to educational and cultural development. According to Oman’s Tourism Minister:

Tourism development has been accorded special attention by the Sultanate of Oman’s government in its quest for diversification of the economy and sustainable development. The world over, tourism is recognized not only the world’s largest industry, but also as the fastest growing sector. Its role as a key service activity representing a major contribution to direct and indirect employment has not been lost on Oman as it targets the industry to assist in creating direct job opportunities as well as boost the economy through provision of hard currency to improve the balance of payments

(Al-Mandhari, 2004b:10).
The goal of tourism development in Oman is to contribute to the economic, social and cultural well-being of Oman and its people. Recently, the Omani government devoted 3% of the country’s budget to tourism development and the vast projects in which the private sector is investing heavily. Oman has undertaken three major projects. One of them was completed by end of 2005 and opened officially in February 2006: The Barr Al Jissah Resort and Spa (see figure 3.2), located on the bay at Barr Al Jissah, forty-five minutes from Muscat International Airport and just fifteen minutes from the centre of Muscat. The resort comprises three hotels two five-star hotels Al Waha (*The Oasis*) and Al Bandar (*The Town*), and a six-star hotel Al Husun (*The Castle*), all managed by Shangri-La (Barr Al Jissah, 2006).

**Figure 3.2: Shangri-La project in Oman**

Source: Hotel Rental Group (2007)
The second project (see figure 3.3), Almawj (The Wave) is the first major integrated resort and residential development, to be undertaken in the Muscat region, ten minutes from downtown Muscat (The Wave Muscat, 2007). The name was chosen since it captures the essence of this upscale tourism and residential project and reflects Oman's rich seafaring history and close association with the ocean, as well as the physical shape of the new development (OITE, 2005). It will have a tourist village with two hotels (one five-star and one four-star), villas, shopping centres and a golf course. The tourism component will contain at least three superb hotels and waterfront retail, and the residential component will encompass a mix of quality villas, townhouses and apartments - some of which will be waterfront and beachfront properties (The Wave Muscat, 2007).

Figure 3.3: The Wave Project

Source: Journey of Light (2007)
The third project Al Madina A'Zarqa (*The Blue City*), on the coast of Al Sawadi, will be more than just a resort development (Barrault, 2006). Although shopping centres and hotels will be included in the project, the emphasis of the project is on providing residents and visitors a living and working environment that is advanced, productive, culturally-satisfying and safe (*Al Madina A'Zarqa, 2007*).

The project site is located on the northern coast of Oman, between Barka and Al Musanna approximately 67 km (30 minutes) from Muscat International Airport, 90 km from the centre of Muscat and 10 km from the nearest town, Barka. The project is intended to be built on a 15 kilometer seafront site over the next 15-20 years with a building density of 20-30 million square metres of gross floor area in several, market-determined, phases (Ministry of Tourism, 2007) (see figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.4: The Blue City Project**

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2007).
These three projects are not only tourism and development projects for the country, but they also represent an important source of job creation. For instance; the project company expects that at the peak of development and construction, The Blue City alone will require around 10,000 workers, professionals, and consultants, of which a minimum of 3,000 are expected to be Omani youth (Ministry of Tourism, 2007). It is anticipated that once all the city phases are operational, The Blue City will generate around 71,269 jobs, of which a minimum of 35,609 jobs are expected to be occupied by Omani nationals. This means that, at a minimum, 50% of jobs are anticipated to be occupied by Omani nationals (Ministry of Tourism, 2007). The jobs are expected to be in residential management, maintenance, municipality services, tourism, retail, entertainment, and healthcare, education, and utilities sectors. 13% of the job opportunities will be in the tourism industry (Ministry of Tourism, 2007).

Tourism holds significant potential for the Gulf region in the coming future, and within the region, Oman has been hailed as a highly-attractive emerging market of international standard with huge potential. This is due to its variety of natural assets and rich culture and heritage (FINCORP, 2004).

3.8.1 Natural Assets

Oman has variety of constituents as a tourism destination, such as; 1,700 kilometres of coastline featuring fjords, acres of silver sands and picture-perfect bays, soaring mountains, palm forests and deep dunes (Mice, 2006). Oman’s location in the far South East of the Arabic Peninsula makes it a strategic destination, as it emerges at three seas which are the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The entire Sultanate possesses with many historical antiquities, fortresses and forts which are in the midst of
a series of mountains and the three seas, in addition to the clean environment (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

All these elements make the country a very beautiful tourist destination to be visited especially between October and April when the temperature averages between 25°C and 35°C during the day and between 17°C and 19°C at night. Mild weather is experienced year-round in the mountains and in the Dhofar region (figure, 3.5) which enjoys a regular monsoon between June and October every year (Mice, 2006). It is not only the landscapes which attract the tourist or the visitor to Oman, but it is also the rich cultural heritage and ancient history that goes back thousands of years. Oman's numerous archeological sites are widely regarded as potentially significant attractions for those who are interested in ancient history and early civilisation (Ministry of National Economy, 2003).

Figure 3.5: Dhofar Region

Source: ABA (2005)
3.8.2 The Country’s Heritage

The Sultanate’s heritage which is essential part of life in the Sultanate, does not only consist of forts, castles, ancient buildings and other material symbols, but it also exists in the abstract sense including the nation’s customs, traditions, science, literature and the arts (Ministry of Information, 2006).

Tourists can enjoy both ancient and recent civilizations through the variety of tourism products such as caravans, cultural, and diving tourism (Ministry of National Economy, 2001). The Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Heritage and Culture (MHC) in cooperation with United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), have categorised and named all significant heritage sites worldwide. For instance, to date, UNESCO has classified three major localities in the Sultanate (Ministry of Tourism, 2006):

1- Bahla Fort, its perimeter and adjoining oasis in A’Dakhiliyah Region, listed in 1987.

2- The Third Millennium (BC) Settlement and Tombs in Bat. Additionally, the Al-Khatm and Al-Ain locations in Adh-Dhahira Region, all listed in 1988.

3- The Luban (Frankincense) Route in the Governorate of Dhofar which was listed in 2000. The Route comprises the ancient cities of Al-Blaid and Shasr, Khuwr Rori, and Wadi Dooka. These locations collectively contributed to the flourishing of the frankincense trade for many centuries throughout the Middle Ages.

The resin of the frankincense tree, is one of a number of aromatic substances that, when burned gives off a pungent, pleasurable smell. In Oman, frankincense is a symbol of hospitality. People in Oman are infused with frankincense; even government’s buildings are incensed daily with frankincense. At home, Omanis perform their courtly
ceremonies of hospitality, the graceful pouring of coffee, the dates and sweets delicately proffered, in an atmosphere perfumed by frankincense (Smith, 2000).

3.9 Employment in Public and Private Sector

Tourism development has been an activity which depends on two main groupings: the public and the private sector. The government, in its leadership role, has always been known to spearhead and pioneer tourism development, by laying the infrastructural foundation, providing the legislative, physical, economic, social and environmental framework, within which the private sector can operate (WTO, 2005).

Oman 2020 objectives involve the provision of employment opportunities in both the Omani public and private sectors and their training and qualifications in a manner suitable to the labour market. In the tourism sector in Oman, although the private sector could have a greater involvement in contributing to the development strategy for human resources for the tourism industry, without strong support from the government, and the commitment and co-operation from the industry and education, the development of human resources in the hotel industry may be insufficient.

3.9.1 Public Sector

Government (public-sector) employment is considered to be an important source of upward economic mobility and job security in developing countries (Hinchliffe, 1987 cited in Al-Lamki, 1998). In Oman this is very much the case. Until recently, the government sector has been the main and preferred employer of Omani nationals. One big obstacle is that almost all Omani graduates want to work for the government. Salaries are generally higher than in the private sector, working hours are shorter and job security is greater (The Middle East Magazine, 1989 in Kutschera, 2002). The
attractiveness of jobs in the government sector relates to its special attributes, i.e.: life-long employment; further educational opportunities; wages; benefits; working conditions; working hours; retirement benefits. The absence of similar features and work conditions in the private-sector has resulted in a huge discrepancy between public and private sector employment of Omani nationals (Al-Lamki, 1998). Employment in the civil public sector has been affected by two main factors. Firstly, the approval of the early retirement system and secondly the Omanisation processes (Ministry of National Economy, 2002).

3.9.2 Private Sector
Regardless that prior to the late 1990s, the private sector’s contribution to economic growth in the GCC remained negligible as the public sector/oil was the engine of economic growth (Shochat, 2008), for sustainable development, Oman believes that the private sector must increasingly play the dominant leadership role and public sector needs to progressively withdraw from all areas where the private sector can take over with efficiency and competitiveness.

In July 1994, the government of the Sultanate initiated a wide-ranging privatization programme to attract private investment and to activate the role of the private sector particularly for infrastructure projects (Eur, 2003).

Private-sector development is a key focus area of Vision 2020 and the drive in this field acquired significant momentum in the Fifth and Sixth Five-Year Development Plans for all industries. Private-sector development will continue to remain amongst the foremost goals and will only gain increasing momentum in the coming years to fulfil the Vision 2020 objectives of Oman. This enhanced role will be achieved through different ways,
and one of the important ways is; increasing the private sector share in GDP and adhering to the goal of the natural gas-based projects. Private sector investment opportunities abound also in other diversification sectors notably tourism, information technology, mining, fishing besides in traditional areas of industry and manufacturing (Ministry of National Economy, 2005a).

The Omanisation rate in the private sector increased during the Plan period from 16.4% in 2000 to 25% in 2005, and in the public-sector the corresponding increase was from 74% to 81.8% (KMPG, 2006).

Employment of Omanis in the private sector registered a strong growth of 16% in 2006, thereby extending the phase of high employment growth in the private sector for Omanis that started in 2003. Employment growth for expatriates in the private sector, which had decelerated considerably to 0.1% in 2005 and 4.2% in 2004, registered a sharp growth by 20.2% in 2006, led by 30.6% in growth in the construction sector (CBO, 2006). This could be explained as a result of job creations associated with the new tourism projects developed in the last four years such as Shangri-La, and the new projects are developing, such as the Blue City Project and The Wave Project (Ministry of National Economy, 2006).

Unlike the private sector, the employment of expatriates in the Government civil (Public) sector fell by about 2.1% in 2006 (CBO, 2006). The Ministerial decision in 2004, which cancelled a previous decision that prevented citizens working in the private sector from joining the government sector, created a new issue with positive and negative impacts regarding employees in the private sector. The positive impact is to encourage the citizens to join the private sector and dispel their fear that they would not
be eligible for government jobs if they worked in the private sector. On the other hand the decision has its negative impact in terms of preserving the rights of the private sector as qualified and trained employee in private sector could leave the sector and join the public sector, which will result in loose of employees in the private sector (Al Zedjali, 2004).

3.10 Employment Legislations
It is expected that employers should employ Omani workers to the maximum possible extent. The ratio of Omanis to foreigners in the various economic sectors or the activities covered by each sector may be necessitated by the circumstances of each sector or activity and the supply of necessary Omani workers shall be determined by a decision of the Minister of Manpower (Ministry of Manpower, 2003). The employer is prohibited from recruiting non-Omani workers unless he has obtained a permit from the Ministry. That permission is subject to the following conditions:

1- If there is no sufficient workforce for the post or occupation among Omanis;
2- If the employer has complied with the prescribed percentage of Omanisation; and
3- If the employer pays the determined fee.

The minimum limit of wages is determined by the Council of Ministries according to the requirements of the economic circumstances and may determine a minimum limit of the wage of a specific category of workers who are occupying jobs or occupations, the conditions of nature of the work of which necessitate such determination (Ministry of Manpower, 2003). The minimum wage for most citizens in the private sector is approximately $260 (105 OMR) per month, with $52 (20 OMR) for transportation and
housing. The minimum wage is insufficient to provide a decent standard of living for workers and their families (NEE, 2007). However, foreign workers who are highly skilled in some jobs and in managerial positions are often paid much more than their Omani counterparts (NEE, 2007).

3.10.1 Contract of Work

A formal contract between the employee and the employer shall be written before the employee starts the work. The contract of work shall be confirmed by writing and two copies issued in Arabic, one copy for each party. If the contract is written in a language other than Arabic, at least one copy in Arabic shall be equally authentic. If there is no written contract, a worker may establish his rights by all means of proof. The worker shall be given a receipt for the document and certificates which he might have deposited with the employer (Ministry of Manpower, 2003).

One of the articles in the labour legislation which should be included in the contracts is; the basic salary and any allowances, privileges or remunerations to and the method and time of payment of the agreed wage.

Another article is about the reasonable period of notice which shall be given by anyone of the parties who intends to revoke the contract and shall not be less than the period prescribed by the labour law which is one month (Ministry of Manpower, 2003).

There are also specific legislative and other requirements governing the employment of Omanis and expatriate labour in Oman. These restrict, for instance, approval of the engagement of certain foreign employees and also impose certain rights and obligations on the parties to an employment contract. For example, the Oman Labour Law of 2003 restricts the grounds on which an employer can terminate an employee’s contract.
Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

The employers are also obliged to pay end-of-service benefits to all expatriate employees who have been engaged for more than one year, being an amount equivalent to 15 days salary for each of the first three years of employment and 30 days salary for each year of employment thereafter. The Oman Social Security Law (OSSL) provides for employer’s contribution in respect of Omani employees to be paid into a central fund (Rae and Howard, 2006).

3.10.2 Working Hours in the Private Sector

Workers are not expected to perform actual work for more than nine hours a day, with a maximum limit of forty-eight hours a week depending on the particular company’s policy and not including the intervals devoted for taking food and rest (Ministry of Manpower, 2003). Office hours are usually from 8.30 or 9.00 am to 5.30 or 6.00 pm. There are no differences in time-keeping between summer and winter (Justlanded, 2008).

In the month of Ramadan, the maximum working hours during the month of Ramadan shall be reduced to six hours a day or 36 hours a week for Muslim workers, legally this should apply to all staff, but many companies only apply it to Muslims, who fast during daylight hours (Justlanded, 2008).

Friday is the Muslim rest day and, if the company operates a five-day working week, the other day off will probably the day before or after Friday which will be Thursday or Saturday. However most of Companies work on Thursday from morning until 1 or 2 pm and take Friday off. Saturday is the more popular choice for international companies, as taking Thursday off would mean a reduction in the number of operational days in
common with much of the rest of the world. Conversely, other companies insist on Thursday, as the school ‘weekend’ is Thursday and Friday (Justlanded, 2008).

3.11 Omanisation Plan

In 1970, His Majesty the Sultan Qaboos stated that Oman’s most crucial resource is its national human resources (Al-Lamki, 2006). In recognition of this fact, the government of Oman made a commitment to educate, train and develop its national workforce as a measure towards nation-building and economic development.

The importance of developing the country’s national human resources has been one of the main aims and policies throughout the Sultanate’s successive five year development plans (Ministry of Information, 1991). This was incorporated in the implementation programme of the Economic Development Law 1/75 which stipulated the integral importance of Oman’s national human resources stating that:

It is important to pay attention to the development of the national human resources so that they may carry out their full role in the national economy. In this respect there should be expansion in education and training and improvement in nutrition and public health. The purpose of the program should be to qualify the citizens to engage in economic and productive activity and should not be limited to meeting the needs of the administrative body of the state


Over the last decade, the question of foreign workers’ replacement by Omani nationals has become one of the most sensitive issues in Oman’s economy and political development. The question is not new itself, but the real turning point in the Omanisation of the economy happened in the mid 1990s (Valeri, 2005).

The word Omanisation is derived from Oman the country, to Omanise is to make thing Omani, Omanising the jobs or the Omanisation of the jobs can be defined as getting
occupations and professions localised. Omanisation is a campaign meant not only to ensure jobs for each citizen but also to reduce dependence on expatriates in search of self-reliance in human resources. It has become the government's top priority more than ever before (Ministry of Information, 2002).

The first Omanisation laws were passed in October 1994 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MSAL). The MSAL announced percentages of Omanisation to be adopted by the private sector, for example 60% of workers in the transport, storage and communication sector should be Omanis, 45% in the finance, insurance and real estate sector, 30% in hotels and restaurants, together with 20% in the wholesale and retailing sector (Valeri, 2005).

The Omanisation policy cannot be underestimated, as witnessed in the speech delivered by His Majesty on the 28th National Day in November 1998, which entirely focused on Omanisation. His Majesty the Sultan Qaboos bin Said explicitly said that:

> It is important that citizens should be aware of their vital role in working for the success of the government’s plan for private sector employment, and for the gradual replacement by Omanis of skilled and unskilled expatriates. There are abundant opportunities for honourable work in this private sector. All Omani youth should accept this work unhesitatingly and without false pride. They should also devote themselves to the training and qualifying programs which are organised by the government and the private sector for the purpose of honing the skills they possess, and acquiring new skills that will enhance their performance

(Ministry of Information 2001: 208).

The need for Omanisation emerged after many Omanis received their education and training in different areas, so it became incumbent upon the executive agencies in the country to employ this national manpower to gradually replace the expatriate labour. With the high number of annual graduates from different educational levels, such as
high schools, colleges, institutions and universities, there is an urgent need to supply jobs for these graduates. The plan includes all public and private sector equally.

In October 2001, Sultan Qaboos announced the launch of the SMEP, a drive to help young Omanis set up their own businesses. The government is to donate 2 Millions OMR to the SMEP Fund, which will train young people to launch small enterprises. The government is encouraging the private sector to invest in training young Omanis at all levels. The committee told SMEP that it would train 5,000 young nationals in 2002 and a further 10,000 in 2003. On-the-job trainees will earn 50% of the standard monthly salary during training, with salary costs shared equally by the government and the private sector (Ministry of Information, 2002).

The Omanisation Plan has its impact on the culture and the economy of the culture, according to the Directorate of Economic Research in Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman report (2002) the government of Oman gives priority to the implementation of the Omanisation plan strategy for four major reasons. Firstly, to decrease the enormous inflow of foreign labour, which carries with it customs and traditions, which can have a negative impact on the culture of the host country. Secondly, to address the increasing volume of remittances of these foreign employments, which negatively impact on the balance of payments of the host country economy through leakage. Thirdly, the provision of infrastructure and basic services to this segment of the population creates a heavy economic burden on the host country. Finally, the social repercussions and the chances of deviation of job seekers due to frustration and despair as a result of their failure to find a job (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman report, 2002).
In spite of the obvious improvements in the indicators related to labour market and human resources development during the period 1970-1995 (Ministry of National Economy, 2006), and the increased total of numbers of employees in the public and private sectors according to the Ministry of National Economy (2006), it was noticed that the Omanisation ratio did not change much as it only increased from 34% to 34.3% between 1995 and 2000. Therefore, the planned Omanisation ratio for total labour in 2000 which is estimated at 38.9% has not been achieved.

3.12 Omanisation Plan for the Tourism Sector

The key objective of the Omanisation plan in the tourism sector is to nationalise the labour force in the tourism sector in a way that maintains the sector’s productivity and absorbs the Omani workforces, in the short, medium and long-term.

The economic benefits generated by tourism have encouraged the government of the Sultanate of Oman to make tourism a sector of strategic importance. The sector’s ability to create employment complements the government commitment to Omanisation. Therefore, in response to the recommendations of the Ministry of Manpower (Ministry of Tourism, 2002), instructions have been given to all sectors including tourism sector to form committees to draw up appropriate Omanisation strategies specific to the individual requirements of each.

The Committee for the tourism sector chaired by the Minister of Manpower was given the responsibility of preparing an Omanisation plan for the industry, including all its sub-sectors, and was asked to give careful consideration to the vocational training required to achieve the objectives of the Omanisation plan.
The Committee consists of members from the private and public sectors. The private sector is represented by: Al Bustan Hotel, Bahwan Travels and Tourism Agency, Chairman of Budget Rent A Car, Chairman of Pizza Hut Co. and Director of Marketing of Oman Air.

The data-collecting research and drafting team consists of members from: National Hospitality Institute, Oman Tourism College, Department of Tourism in Sultan Qaboos University, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. In addition to staff members from the Department of Tourism Affairs from Ministry of Tourism.

The vision underlying Oman Economy 2020 emphasised the importance of economic diversification and sustainable utilisation of natural resources. In response, the vision for the tourism sector highlights the importance of developing tourism as a way to diversify the economy, to foster the private sector and to create job opportunities. So according to the objectives of the vision for Oman’s economy 2020, specific objectives have been identified by the Ministry of Tourism (2002) for the tourism sector as below:

1- Achieving an average growth rate of 6.3% and a contributing to the GDP of not less than 1%;
2- Raising the profit of the private sector and increasing its role in promoting and developing the industry;
3- Preserving and protecting social, cultural and environmental values in order to achieve sustainable development;
4- Creating balanced regional development;
5- Developing Omani manpower to meet the requirement of the sector to reach 50% Omanisation rates by 2005;
6- *Seeking self-financing opportunities for different projects and initiatives* (Ministry of Tourism, 2002:5).

The Omanisation plan for the tourism sector includes the following different sub-sectors: airlines, tourist restaurants, tours and travel agencies, hotels, and tourist car rentals. The Omanisation target for the year 2010 set for tourist restaurants is 90%. Aviation companies in this sector will have to achieve a target of 90%, 3-4-5 star hotels 85%, 1-2 star hotels 55%, car rentals 90%, and travel and tourism, in general, 95% (Kumar, 2008). The Omanisation process for the tourism industry in general, and for hotels specifically will take place on three levels:

- Front line and semi-skilled.
- Middle management.
- Top and executive management level.

According to the numbers of the employees and the extent of the Omanisation of the sectors workforce as of October 2002 (Ministry of Tourism, 2002) (Table 3.1) (Figure 3.6), although the overall percentage of Omanisation for the hotel sector has already exceeded the 50% target planned for 2005, there are significant inequalities between the sectors for example the Airline sector has reached 74.03% compared to other sectors such as Tourist Restaurants 30.72%, Tours and Travel Agencies 42.78%, and Hotels 39.11%. This difference and inequality in the ratio of Omanisation is due to the difference in the perception of each sector. For instance, Omani society perceives work in the airline sector to be better than other tourism sectors. However, this is not an uncommon perception, for example, according to LIRN (2003), airline jobs are believed to be intrinsically more attractive than any job in other transportation modes in Taiwan.
Table 3.1: Number of Employees in the Tourism Sector in 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Total of employees</th>
<th>Omanisation Perc. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Omani</td>
<td>Non-Omani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Airlines sector</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>2553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tourist Restaurants</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tours &amp; Travel Agencies</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hotels (5-4-3 stars)</td>
<td>1236</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>3160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tourist car rent sector</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of employees on the fifth sectors and the moderate average of Omanisation percentage</td>
<td>3605</td>
<td>3440</td>
<td>7045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2002

Figure 3.6: Number of Employees in the Tourism Sector in 2002

Since tourism is a new industry in the country, and the Omanisation Plan as a plan applied to the sector is a new as well, the percentage of Omanis in the hotel sector
(39.11%) could be acceptable in terms of figures. However, it could be noticed from table 3.2 that this high percentage demonstrates that Omanis occupying most of the low job positions in hotels compared to expatriates. It could be said that, the focus on the Omanisation Plan as a percentage and figures, might lead the employers to recruit Omanis in low positions to meet the required percentage for the sector regardless the qualifications of the employees.

Table 3.2: The Current Number of Omani and Non-Omani Employees Classified by Job Titles, Educational Qualifications and Experiences in 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Current number</th>
<th>Academic qualification</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Omani</td>
<td>Non-Omani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>440 High school+ Diploma in Management-technical college Diplomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dept-Head Grade A</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>954 High school+ hotel specific training program at least one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dept-Head Grade B (Middle Management)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1236 High school+ hotel specific training program at least one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Section Head Grade C</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>700 High school+ Diploma in Management-technical college Diplomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Junior Staff (R&amp;F) A</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>924 High school+ hotel specific training program at least one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Junior Staff (R&amp;F) B</td>
<td>1236</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1594 High school+ hotel specific training program at least one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2002

So from the table above (3.2), it is clear that when the job skills and qualification requirements decrease the number of Omanis increases, for instance the number of Omanis for the first two positions is very low, but then it increases as the position goes lower. This clarify what mentioned early that employers only focusing on the percentage of Omanisation not considering Omani qualified employees, as they might cost them more than unqualified ones.
3.13 Omanisation for the Hotel Sector

The hospitality sector in the Sultanate is no less important than other sectors related to tourism. The country's warm weather as well as its warm people, makes Oman a hospitable country:

*The Sultanate is famous for its kindness and hospitality of its people, political stability and security, and the presence of tourism infrastructure in the form of hotel chains and tourism establishment*


Interest in Omanising the hotel sector stems from the aspiration in portraying the sector with its Omani taste and culture to the tourists. This is in line with the increasing number of tourist visiting the Sultanate in recent year.

In order to appreciate the importance of the presence of Omani workers in the hotel industry to give the character of the Omani sector, should cast light on some important information in relevance to the sector. For instance the total number of visitors to Oman, and the rate of annual increasing of visitors, number of visitors by nationality, type of accommodation, total numbers of hotels across the country, and in Muscat specifically as the main case study.

The total number of visitors to Oman during 2003 and 2004 was approximately 1,210,424 and 1,407,083 respectively (Ministry of National Economy and Ministry of Tourism, 2006). The visitors from the GCC ranked first in terms of numbers. They reached 647,485 and 539,236 in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Table 3.3 and figure 3.7 illustrate the distribution of inbound visitors by nationality in 2003 and 2004.
Table 3.3: Number of Inbound Visitors in 2003 and 2004 by Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number 2003</th>
<th>Relative Share 2003 (%)</th>
<th>Number 2004</th>
<th>Relative Share 2004 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G.C.C</td>
<td>647,485</td>
<td>53.49</td>
<td>539,236</td>
<td>38.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Arabs</td>
<td>75,483</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>79,746</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>201,025</td>
<td>16.61</td>
<td>287,935</td>
<td>20.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>181,325</td>
<td>14.98</td>
<td>309,017</td>
<td>21.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>105,106</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>191,095</td>
<td>13.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,210,424</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,407,083</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of National Economy and Ministry of Tourism, 2006

Figure 3.7: Relative Share of Inbound Visitors in 2003 by Nationality

When it comes to the purpose of the visit (Table 3.4) (Figure 3.8), visiting relatives and friends was the main motivation for visiting Oman in 2003 and 2004. The number of visitors was 587,624 and 573,111 for 2003 and 2004 respectively. This explains the increasing numbers of visitors from GCC countries, due to shared culture and family
ties with Omani, and due to the summer time climate in the southern part of the country (the monsoon season).

The second purpose was leisure and recreation; it reached 345,566 and 487,553 in 2003 and 2004 respectively. This is due to the weather during the monsoon season in the summer, and between October and April when the weather is mild and the temperatures average between 25°C and 35°C during the day and between 17°C and 19°C at night. The table (3.4) shows the number of inbound visitors by purpose of visit for 2003 and 2004.

Table 3.4: Number of Inbound Visitors by Purpose of Visit in 2003 and 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose Of Visit</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Relative share (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>345566</td>
<td>28.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Relatives &amp; Friends</td>
<td>587624</td>
<td>48.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>210533</td>
<td>17.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>66700</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,210,424</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of National Economy and Ministry of Tourism, 2006
According to the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Tourism (2006), the number of day visitors who visited Oman constituted 14% and 15% for 2003 and 2004 respectively. These visitors were mainly from GCC countries. The visitors who spent between two to six nights were 41% and 40% for 2003 and 2004 respectively.

The majority of visitors in 2003 who stayed with relatives and friends reached 460,203 (38.02%) compared to those who stayed in hotels in 2003, which was 337,194 (27.86%). The main group of visitors were from GCC countries; their number was 253,265 (20.92%) and 199,076 (14.15%) in 2003 and 2004 respectively. This disparity in numbers reflects the high numbers of visitors from GCC countries in 2003 and 2004, who visit their relatives and friends in Oman due to cultural and family ties.

In 2004, the situation was different; the majority of visitors who stayed in hotels and hotel apartments were 505,918 (35.96%) – they were mainly Europeans and constituted
16.05% of the total number, followed by those staying with relatives and friends (33.12%) - who were mainly GCC citizens (14.15%). Table 3.5 and Figure 3.9 and 3.10 show the distribution of inbound visitors for 2003 and 2004 by nationality and type of accommodation.

Table 3.5: Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2003 and 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>G.C.C</th>
<th>Other Arabs</th>
<th>Asians</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; Hotel Apartment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>87,247</td>
<td>9,848</td>
<td>53,137</td>
<td>131,807</td>
<td>55,154</td>
<td>337,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>103,734</td>
<td>13,870</td>
<td>64,930</td>
<td>225,820</td>
<td>97,563</td>
<td>505,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnished Flats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>132,814</td>
<td>5,033</td>
<td>3,746</td>
<td>1,567</td>
<td>2,758</td>
<td>145,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>104,397</td>
<td>4,146</td>
<td>4,779</td>
<td>2,218</td>
<td>4,878</td>
<td>120,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Relatives or Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>253,265</td>
<td>40,261</td>
<td>106,139</td>
<td>24,688</td>
<td>35,850</td>
<td>460,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>199,076</td>
<td>33,170</td>
<td>135,406</td>
<td>34,931</td>
<td>63,416</td>
<td>465,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>28,612</td>
<td>20,130</td>
<td>27,471</td>
<td>18,418</td>
<td>1,655</td>
<td>96,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>22,490</td>
<td>16,585</td>
<td>35,046</td>
<td>26,060</td>
<td>2,927</td>
<td>103,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>647,485</td>
<td>75,483</td>
<td>201,025</td>
<td>181,325</td>
<td>105,106</td>
<td>1,121,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>539,236</td>
<td>79,746</td>
<td>287,935</td>
<td>309,071</td>
<td>191,095</td>
<td>1,407,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

Figure 3.9: Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2003

![Figure 3.9: Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2003]

Figure 3.10: Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2004

![Figure 3.10: Number of Inbound Visitors by Nationality and Type of Accommodation in 2004]

Source: Ministry of National Economy and Ministry of Tourism, 2006
According to the numbers reported from the Ministry of National Economy (2005), the number of hotels in the Sultanate increased from 39 hotels in 1995 to 133 hotels in 2003 with average annual growth rate of 20.7%, and the number of hotel rooms increased from 2855 rooms in 1995 to 6,462 rooms in 2003, with an average annual growth rate of 13.2% (table 3.6) (figure 3.11). According to the Ministry of National Economy Statistics (2005) the total number of hotels in the Muscat region is 58 hotels in 2003 (figure 3.12), this number increased to be 72 hotels in 2006 (Ministry of National Economy, 2007).

According to 2007 statistic results, the total number of hotels across the country increased from 133 in 2003 (Ministry of National Economy, 2005) to 172 in 2006 (Ministry of National Economy, 2007). However it should be noted that this research is based on the 2003 statistics as a result of time limitation.
Table 3.6: Number of Hotels and Rooms by Region and Class in 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Five Star</th>
<th>Four Star</th>
<th>Three Star</th>
<th>Two Stars</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Batinah</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musandam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad-Dhahirah</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad-Dakhiliyah</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash Shargiyah</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Wusta</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhofar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1321</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of National Economy, 2005
The Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Tourism commissioned a study of the number of employees by class of hotels to illustrate how the Omanisation plan is being applied in the hotel sector.
Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

The total number of employees in 2001 and 2002 was about 4282 and 4353 respectively. The number of Omani employees was 1575 and 1652 in 2001 and 2002 respectively, which counts 36% and 38% of total employees. 63% and 62% of total employees are non-Omani employees in 2001 and 2002.

With the increasing number of hotels in Oman which stood at 133 in 2003, the number of Omani employees increased to 1840 which counts 39% of the total employee in the hotel sector, but at the same time the number of non-Omani employees also increased as demonstrated in the table below (Table 3.7).
Table 3.7: Number of Employees by Class of Hotel for 2001, 2002 and 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omani</td>
<td>Non Omani</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Star</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>1620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Star</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>1503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Star</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Star</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>2797</td>
<td>4282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of National Economy, 2005
Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

Based on the information above, it could be said that with the annual increasing number of visitors from all over the world to the Sultanate, and with the increasing number of hotels across the country, the need to increase the number of Omanis in the hotel sector is essential for different reasons. First, it is important to portray the sector in an Omani character to help the tourist to taste being in Oman. Second, although the expatriate can work longer hours and get less paid, their income outflows the country to expatriate’s country of origin. Furthermore, the expatriate could move his or her culture to work, which will result in giving the work different character than the Omani one.

Many policies regarding the number of expatriates are implemented such as; raising the fees for expatriate labour recruitment from (70) to O.R (100) (Ministry of National Economy, 2002). Notwithstanding the government effort in Omanising the jobs in the hotel sector, the number of expatriate workers in this sector is still outstripping the number of Omani employees (see table 3.7). The increasing rate of non-Omani compared to Omani employees in different jobs in the sector shows the extent of preference of employers to recruit expatriate staff rather than Omanis.

The country has started to review its labour market and problems from the increased number of Omani graduates who are seeking for jobs, as well as the increasing number of expatriates in the country. The government is also concern about training and developing human resources in different sector including tourism and hospitality.
3.14 Importance of Human Resource Development in Oman

A number of speeches by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed show how much the human resource development of all Omanis has received his full support. He considers that "the development of human resources is the foundation stone of our policy" (Ministry of Information, 2001:188) and explained that "the human being is the power, the instrument and the ultimate arm of national development. Thus, we exert every effort to provide him with these essential qualities so that we can all, together, build our nation" (Ministry of Information, 2001:188).

The challenges facing Oman, particularly the need for self-sufficiency and the need to diversify the economy and keep pace with technological change, requires new educational goals to prepare Omanis for life and work in the new conditions created by the modern global economy (Rassekh, 2004).

Human capital theory suggests that the reward people expect from the investment in themselves in the form of education and training is the motivation behind their decisions to pursue education and training. So they invest in education and training under the expectations that they will be rewarded by higher earnings during their working life (Becker, 1975). Therefore people's expectations regarding employment and job opportunities are high. People feel that their educational attainment will guarantee them the jobs in the government sector. Hence Omani society considers education to be the key towards securing a comfortable paying job in the government sector, and has taken full advantage of the educational and training facilities offered by the government in order to improve their social well being (Al-Lamki, 1998).

Since human resources are the factors of investment in any organisation, the uncertainty of the salary the employees might receive as a result of their production as well as the
training they get might be of a concern for them. If the well-trained employees are targeted for employment, but they get paid similar to untrained ones. This will result that this employee prefers to stay in the same firm with same payment and not to get any training since the pay will be the same for the untrained ones. Consequently, such employees will probably get normal payment whatever their level of competence. However, if such a concept occurs then workers prefer to go straight into a job rather than spending time in training, since the wages given during the training period are low.

The development of any organisation for both employers and employees required that the remuneration should distinguish trained workers from untrained ones. Therefore, there can be more opportunities for trained workers who get training from a certain firm to get other job opportunities from other firms which may result in a loss to the original firm. In order to prevent such a loss the firm might increase the given wage to the trained employees after the training period is complete compared to untrained employees. This may construct an attractive and competitive field for employees to get job in that particular firm rather which appreciate the trained employees than other firms that offer stable wages. It may also lead to a potentially beneficial development for both employers and employees which allows both parties to take a share of responsibility of such development.

The government is concerned about the image that tourists could draw from the country, and the tourism sector. Therefore the Omani government has started to consider different questions, such as: do the nationalities of the employees in hotels affect tourist levels of satisfaction? In other words, do tourists prefer to be served by local Omani employees and experience authentic Omani service, so as to taste the difference of being abroad? To achieve this aim, the government has spent a lot of effort and money on
educating and training graduates to be able to enter the tourism and hospitality labour market. In January 1996, a major step forward in the training of Omanis in the hotel industry came with the opening of the National Hospitality Institute (NHI). The NHI is a public company quoted on the Omani Stock Exchange. In February 1997, the first batch of 55 male and female trainees, sponsored by the Vocational Training Authority, were awarded their first level certificates and were given on-the-job training in several hotels. In May 1999, the fourth batch of 95 trainees obtained their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), bringing the number of Omanis trained by the Institute to around 450. Omanis now make up 37% of the 34,549 employees in the hotel and catering business, which exceeds the Omanisation target of 30%, set by the Government (Ministry of Information, 2002). Furthermore, to develop the tourism sector and to facilitate the entry of foreigners to the Sultanate, a training plan for a group of graduates of the Archeology College of Sultan Qaboos University to work as tourists guides, was presented to the Council of Ministries. Also a situational study was taken on the prospect of Omanisation in the tourism and hospitality sector, and the importance of establishing a Hotel and Tourism Training College in the Sultanate (Ministry of National Economy, 2001).

3.15 Tourism and Hospitality Education in Oman

To create more job opportunities for graduate students, and to develop the human resources in the hospitality industry, and to restore the lack of skills amongst the employees in tourism and hospitality industry, with an effort to implement the Omanisation Plan, the government of the Sultanate of Oman has made every effort to
Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

educate and train human resources in the industry through the development of education in this area, whether continuing professional education, or the vocational education.

The government has encouraged Omanis to enter the labour market by supporting them through National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). Through this programme, the government sponsors school graduates who have not officially held any job. The organisation is responsible for finding a sponsoring company for each candidate to provide both workplace training and employment after completion of their training. A proportion of the training organisations’ funding is dependent upon candidates being in employment six months after achieving their NVQ. The organisations keep track of the candidates who change jobs after completing their training which is a difficult task for centres, as many believe they are deprived of income which they should have received (Wilkins, 2002).

Putting the Omanisation Plan into practice, however, also has implications for the type and nature of education that is offered to students. The aim of the government is to secure the country prosperity and future economic growth. Its success will, to a large extent, depend on how effective the education system is in providing young Omani citizens with the knowledge and skills they require for the changing employment market. The government therefore, initiated different institutions to teach the tourism and hospitality studies, such as; the Department of Tourism in the College of Art and Social Sciences in SQU, Oman College Tourism, and NHI.
3.15.1 Department of Tourism in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)

The department aims to produce qualified personnel to work in the various fields of tourism; it will also be a nucleus for academic and professional training in the Sultanate (Abdul-Ghani, 2006), aspiring to become the centre of academic and vocational education in the Sultanate, since this type of education is always of great interest in terms of employment, both in government and the private sector locally or globally. It also aims to supply the labour market with the required qualified human resources. This accordingly will aid the university in contributing to the development of human resources in the Sultanate (SQU, 2008). See appendix 2.

3.15.2 Oman College Tourism

Oman College Tourism was called the Oman Tourism and Hospitality Academy, established in 2001, and is sponsored by the Ministry of Manpower. The Academy is situated in the capital area close to Muscat International Airport adjacent to an international four-star hotel (OTHA, 2008). The college aims to provide young talented Omani people with the best education in the tourism and hospitality industry, thereby creating job opportunities and building careers. See appendix 3.

3.15.3 National Hospitality Institute (NHI)

The National Hospitality Institute is a provider of quality vocational training for the Hospitality, Catering and Travel Industries in the Gulf region. The institute is a public company in the private sector with its board of directors being representatives of the leading hotels and catering companies in Oman (NHI, 2008).
The Institute is located in the Wadi Kabir district of Muscat. The Institute has a training kitchen, and restaurant open to the public 5 days a week. On the accommodation side NHI has 5 guest rooms available for the public to reserve just like a hotel to keep the reception and housekeeping departments occupied and gives hands on experience to the students.

NHI provides short and long courses, part time and full time courses. The courses vary from a day courses to a full year courses, and range from professional Food Production and Cookery, Food service, Housekeeping, Front office- Reception, and Fast food through to Travel services. See appendix 4.

Tourism and hospitality skills are critically needed and there are many opportunities available in a multitude of fields (Abdul-Ghani, 2006). To offer employees opportunities for growth and development, educators and personnel managers attempt continually to develop the concept of career path in tourism and hospitality.

3.16 Concept of Career-Paths in Hospitality and Tourism in Oman

Referring to section 3.15, the programmes at each institution leads to different career-path. Figure 3.13 is modified by Abdul-Ghani (2006) to show the positioning of the three major hospitality and tourism education providers in Oman. The fundamental premise of this general model is that people can pursue a variety of reasonably well-defined alternative routes, first through the educational system and subsequently, through the industry itself. Based on the training experience gained, combined with high-quality performance, a person can pursue a career path starting at different levels, with the ultimate goal of achieving the position of senior executive. While not everyone
will have the ability or will necessarily want to pass through all levels of the model, it does provide defined career-paths for those who are interested (Abdul-Ghani, 2006).

Figure 3.13: A Schematic Model Illustrating the Concept of Career Path in Hospitality and Tourism in the Sultanate of Oman

Source: Abdul-Ghani (2006: 78)
3.17 Summary

Since the research deals with employment in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman, it was necessary to contextualise the Sultanate of Oman and explain the composition of its population. It was revealed that the highest proportion of the population was the age group of 15-64. It could be argued that some of the young individuals are representative of those who leave school at an early age and start looking for jobs.

It was also necessary to identify the Omani society and how Islamic religion and the traditions of the society have a great impact on all aspects of people’s lives. It was revealed also the women participate at different levels in the workforce. However, there are degrees of preferences by the Omani society to some jobs rather than others, such as medicine, teaching, nursing and social sciences.

This chapter provided a clear picture about tourism in the country and its economical importance towards the development of the country. It has also been shown from this chapter the economic diversification in the country, as well as the importance of the emergence of tourism sector as an alternative source of income to oil sector. The researcher was keen to shed the light on the development of the hotel sector in the Sultanate by an overview of the different new projects. It can be said that these projects are not only a tourism and development projects, but through these projects, different jobs will be created for Omanis.

The implementation of the Omanisation Plan is also another phase of the economic diversification which will be presented in detail later in the chapter. Therefore, it was important to include the data about employment in the public and private sectors and employment legislations in terms of working hours, employment contract, and wages.
Chapter Three: Contextualising the Sultanate of Oman

The Omanisation Plan aims to both ensure jobs for Omani citizens and to reduce dependence on expatriate employees. Since the research talks about Omani employment in the hotel sector, and since the OP is being implemented in all different sectors, including the hotel sector, which is a private sector. It was important to provide the reader with information like; the number of hotels in the Sultanate in general and in Muscat the main unit of the case study specifically. It was also essential to show the increasing number of hotels across the country to absorb the increasing number of annual visitors to the country. This therefore requires a subsequent rise in the number of Omani employees in the hotel sector. However, the data provided showed that while the number of Omanis is increasing in the sector, the number of non-Omani employees is also increasing. It also shows that whilst there is an increased number of Omanis, they tend to occupy the lower level jobs. This phenomenon needed to be studied to find out reasons why that the number of non-Omanis is still outstripping the Omani employees. The researcher felt that a SWOT analysis of the Omanisation Plan was important to find out the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of this plan (Figure 3.14).
**Figure 3.14: SWOT analysis for Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Economical diversification  
- Decreasing reliance on expatriates  
- Increasing private enterprises  
- Lessen the outflow of compensation paid to expatriates  
- Protecting society from socio-cultural influence of expatriates on Oman. (expatriate values transition)  
- National stability of the country.  
- Giving the tourist the experience of being abroad and taste the Omani culture being served by Omanis. | - Absence of expertise in specific jobs.  
- Ignored the attitude of Omanis towards some jobs.  
- Placed an important on the implementation as a plan (on papers) without following up the real situation on different organisations. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Opportunities for unemployed Omanis to get jobs  
- Absorb high number of graduates  
- Development of Omani workforce.  
- Increasing the participations of Omanis in hotel sector. | - Decreasing business expansion and foreign investment in Oman  
- Spending of expatriate and its impact on the local economy.  
- It could lead to a rhetoric data based on number of Omanis registered, but the reality is the expatriate is doing the job.  
- Spending lots of money and effort in the OP without getting a clear result about the number of Omanis. (Waste of money & effort). |

Through what was referred to in this chapter, it can be noted that the government of the Sultanate of Oman is making remarkable efforts to achieve the OP in the tourism and hotel sector. The effort of educating and training human resource to qualify them to enter the labour market was also apparent. This was through the different educational institutions to teach the tourism and hospitality studies to prepare the Omanis to enter the labour market and to help achieve the OP. It is also been revealed from figure (3.13)
that there is an educational system and educational providers for tourism and hospitality education and clear career paths for different positions.

Analysing the OP (figure 3.14) shows that there are a number of very strength and positive factors driving and promoting the strategy that underpins the Omanisation Plan for tourism sector in general and hotel sector specifically such as; finite nature of oil, as well as the diversification of economy. Increasing the number of private enterprises is another driving force for the Omanisation Plan. Another important force is the presence of large numbers of expatriate workers which is correlated to the outflow of the compensation paid to these expatriate workers. The plan is also helping to protect society from socio-cultural influence of expatriates on Oman to accomplish the national stability of the country. Giving the tourist the experience of being abroad and taste the Omani culture being served by Omanis is one of the important reasons to implement the OP in the hotel sector.

Notwithstanding the strength of the OP, it has weak aspects as well. By replacing expatriates with Omanis in some jobs, this could result in the absence of expertise in certain jobs where Omanis lack of skills, which therefore affect the service quality. The attitude of Omanis towards some job could be negative, but because they have to do the job, this will also affect their emotions and cause a stress, which therefore reflected in their work performance. It could also be argued that the importance placed on the implementation of the OP might result in numbers on papers regardless the following up of the real situation in some organizations including hotels.

The plan also has few opportunities in terms of creating jobs for unemployed Omanis. Replacing the expatriate with Omanis might resolve the issue of high numbers of
unemployed school leavers and graduate students. It will also provide a chance for Omanis to get developed and trained to enter the labour market and participate in the workforce in the hotel sector. However, the plan also has some threats such as decreasing the foreign business investments in the country on one hand, and the increasing of expatriate workers on the other hand.

Placing high importance on implementing the OP, might lead to rhetoric of data, as employees only keen to register Omanis to meet the OP required percentage. This means that the number of Omanis will not be real and the number of expatriate will rise as well. It could also lead employers to employ Omanis in low level jobs which do not require costly training, and recruit skilled expatriate to fill other jobs for less cost. Another threat of implementing the plan is that it consumes lots of money and effort, whereas the outcome could not be equivalent to spent money and efforts. Therefore, the researcher needs to explore the extent of the success of implementing the OP in the hotel sector which will be found out from the field study.
# Chapter Four: Research Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Introduction to Social Research</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Research Paradigms</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Theoretical Approach</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Epistemology: Constructionism</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 Theoretical Perspective: Interpretivism</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 Phenomenology</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Practical Approach</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.1 Qualitative Versus Quantitative</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2 Methodology: Using a Case Study: OMAN</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2.1 Types of Case Studies</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Sampling</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.1 Sampling Technique for Qualitative Research</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.2 Sampling Technique for this Study</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.2 Representativeness of the Qualitative Sample</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Methods of Data Collection</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.1 Document and Archival Material Analysis</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.2 Interviews: Objective Three</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.2.1 Types of Interviews</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.3 Stages of the Interviews to Achieve Objective Three</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Stage One of the Interviews</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Stage Two of the Interviews</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Transcribing and Translating the Interviews</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Coding</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.1 Coding Government officials:</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1- Coding Tourism Academics</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Coding Tourism Consultants</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Coding Consultants from Ministry of Manpower</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.2 Coding Hotel Human Resource Managers</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.3 Coding Hotel Employees</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 Analysing the Interviews</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11 Ethical Consideration</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12 Reliability, Validity and Triangulation</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12.1 Reliability</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12.2 Validity</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12.3 Triangulation</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13 Generalisability of Results</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the qualitative approach used in this research. It includes the social research, outlines and describes the research paradigms, the epistemological and theoretical perspectives of the research and provides a justification for choosing the research design and methodology. The chapter further gives an overview of the fieldwork of the study, as well as details about the different methods used to collect the data to achieve the aim of the research in two stages. The first stage used document analysis from different government ministries to achieve objective two. Stage two used semi-structured interviews in two phases to achieve objective three. It concludes with a description of how the data was transcribed and analysed.

4.2 Introduction to Social Research

Crotty (1998) suggests that the researcher's theoretical perspective (view of the world), which represent certain ways of understanding different questions 'what is' (ontology) and 'what it means to know' (epistemology) has great implications for the way in which the research is conducted in terms of methodology and methods. So an interrelationship exists between the theoretical perspectives adopted by researchers and the methodology and methods used. Gray (2004) reports that despite the natural tendency for the researcher (especially the beginner researcher) to choose a data collection method and get on with the job, the choice of the methods will be influenced by the research methodology chosen. This methodology, in turn, will be influenced by the theoretical
perspective adopted by the researcher, and, in turn by the researcher's epistemological stance.

So, justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into assumption about reality that we bring to our work, which means asking about these assumptions, is asking about the theoretical perspective. It also reaches into the understanding you and I have of what human knowledge is, what it entails, and what status can be ascribed to it. What kind of knowledge do we believe will be attained by our research? What characteristics do we believe that knowledge to have? Here we are touching upon a pivotal issue

(Crotty, 1998:2).

Denscombe (2003) argues that the process of putting together a piece of good research is not something that can be done by a set of edicts about what is right and wrong. It is about the decision for the social researcher to choose which strategy to use for the research.

4.3 Research Paradigms

Figure 4.1: Elements of Research Process

Source: Adapted from Crotty (1998:4)
Figure (4.1) illustrate the elements of the research process which include the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises which may be termed to be their paradigm or interpretive framework. Each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, the question the researcher asks or the interpretation he or she brings to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

While ontology is the study of being, epistemology tries to understand what it means to know (Gray, 2004), and the methodology (how do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?) (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The researcher can identify his or her inquiry paradigm by answering three interconnected questions:

- **The ontological question**- what is the form and nature of reality, and what can be known about reality?

- **The epistemological question**- what is the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known?

- **The methodological question**- how can the researcher find out what she/he believes can be known? (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004:35).

Below is a discussion of the epistemological choice and the theoretical approach for this research that justifies this combination (Figure 4.2).
Figure 4.2: Epistemology, Theoretical perspective, Methodology, and Methods Adapted for the Research

Source: Adapted from Crotty (1998)

4.4 Theoretical Approach

4.4.1 Epistemology: Constructionism

Crotty (1998:3) defines epistemology as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology".

Epistemology is derived from a Greek word ‘episteme’ which means knowledge and ‘logos’ meaning explanation (Miller and Brewer, 2003). Epistemology therefore is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998).

Knowing about what we know and how in tourism is an epistemological question, epistemology being the branch of philosophy which studies knowledge, and which is interested in the origins and nature of knowing and the construction of knowledge, and
the claims and assumptions that are made about what the nature of knowledge is (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

Constructionism provides a methodology for investigating the beliefs and viewpoints of individual respondents in regard with the issues discussed rather than investigating an external reality, such as the tangible and comprehensible economic and technological dimensions of management (Hunt, 1991). According to Crotty (1998), this idea rejects the objectivist view of human knowledge and holds that there is no objective truth waiting to be discovered. Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered but constructed. This means that different people may construct meanings in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998).

In this research the epistemological choice finds itself rooted in constructionism. Constructionists believe that people make their own reality and that there are no universal laws external to human interaction waiting to be discovered (Miller and Brewer, 2003), and meaning or truth, comes into existence in and out of people’s engagement with the realities in the world (Crotty, 1998). According to Walsh (2001:218) “constructionism is the view that society is to be seen as socially constructed on the basis of how its members make sense of it and not seen as an object- like reality”.

The researcher task in this research is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge when exploring the implementation of Omanisation Plan, and the human resource issues in the hospitality industry in Oman. This involves investigating the beliefs and viewpoints of respondents re the issues of research, and
Chapter Four: Research Approach

how they make sense of their view, as well as how the respondents construct their understanding of the phenomena. Therefore the researcher tends to use research methods, such as interviews, which gather multiple perspectives drawn from the inductive nature of qualitative research. The participants in this research are viewed as helping to construct the ‘reality’ with the researcher (Robson, 2002).

The definition of constructionism provided by Crotty (1998:4) highlights the appropriateness of this paradigm to this particular research, by identifying and understanding the myriad of mental constructions of the world, whilst establishing whether there is harmony among them.

all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human being and their world, and developed and transmitted within essentially social context.

4.4.2 Theoretical Perspective: Interpretivism

Interpretivism is the “systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world” (Neuman, 2006:71). It aims to discover how the subject of study understands his or her life. It moves away from obtaining knowledge through external observation and experimental manipulation of human subjects, towards an understanding by means of conversations with the human beings to be understood (Babbie, 1998). Interpretive research attempts to study a phenomenon in its natural settings and interpret and explain the phenomenon through the meanings that people assign to them (Myers, 1997).

At every point in research, (in observing, reporting, and interpreting), a host of assumptions are evident. These assumptions about human knowledge, and about
realities encountered in our human world, shape the meaning of research questions, the
purposiveness of research methodologies, and interpretability of research findings
(Crotty, 1998). "As far as human affairs are concerned, any understanding of actions
comes through an interpretative understanding of social action and involves as
explanation of relevant antecedent phenomena as meaning —complexes" (Crotty, 1998: 69).

For qualitative research, the interpretivist approach tends to be favored by researchers,
because they find that people's words provide greater access to their subjective meaning
than do statistical trends (Lazar, 2001). Therefore interpretivism is important in this
research to be able to get more information from the people being interviewed in respect
of their views and beliefs, in order to build an understanding and interpretation of their
words about the relevant phenomena.

4.4.3 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophical term which refers to a consideration of all perceived
phenomenon, both the objective and subjective (Babbie, 1998). Phenomenology as an
approach to social research is opposed to the objectivity of positivism and has been used
by some writers as an umbrella term covering styles of research that do not rely on
measurement, statistics or things generally associated with the scientific method.
Phenomenological research generally deals with people's perceptions or meanings,
attitudes and beliefs, and their feelings and emotions (Denscombe, 2003). In other
words, phenomenology is an exploration, via personal experience, of prevailing cultural
understanding (Gray, 2004).
One of the advantages of phenomenological research is its focus on the inductive collection of large amount of data. As an approach, is much more likely to pick up factors that were not part of the original research focus than other epistemologies (Gray, 2004).

Phenomenological inquiry requires that researchers go through a series of stages (phases) to try to eliminate their own assumptions and biases, examine the phenomenon neutrally without presuppositions, and describe the “deep structure” of the phenomenon based on internal themes that are discovered (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). This is applied to this research by following certain steps to examine the phenomena through different methods (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3: Stages of Data Collection**

In this exploratory research therefore a range of techniques will be employed to explore what is happening and to ask questions about a phenomenon. Saunders *et al* (1997) noted that phenomenology is characterised by a focus on the meaning that research subjects attach to social phenomena, therefore in this research the researcher attempts to
understand what is happening and why it is happening. Accordingly, this research will be based on an in-depth study of the hotel sector in Oman using a phenomenological approach. Such an approach deals with things in-depth and does not try to gloss over the subtleties and complications that are essential parts of many-possibly most-aspects of human experience (Denscombe, 2003).

4.5 Practical Approach:

In any research design, data may be collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Most research textbooks represent research as a multi-stage process which the researcher must follow in order to undertake and complete the project (Saunders et al, 1997). The precise number of stages varies, but the design of a project pertains to the particular way in which hypotheses or questions are tested or investigated (Saunders et al, 1997; Brewerton and Millward, 2001).

According to Brewerton and Millward (2001) the process of setting a research design involves three levels of decision-making (Figure 5.4). At the broadest level, the researcher must decide whether the investigation is going to be largely quantitative or qualitative or both (e.g. what type of evidence is required). At the next level of consideration, the actual design of the study must be decided (e.g. what type of strategy will be adopted). At the lowest level, a decision is about how the evidence is to be collected and analysed (e.g. what type of research methods will be employed).
4.5.1 Qualitative Versus Quantitative

Strauss and Corbin (1998); and Schutt (2001) noted that qualitative methods emphasise observations about natural behaviour and artifacts that capture social life as it is experienced by the participants rather than in categories predetermined by the researcher. It also focuses on human subjectivity, on the meanings that participants attach to the events and that people give to their lives. In another words qualitative methods mean any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification; it refers to research about persons’ lives, experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations.

In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things (Berg, 2001). It uses methods adopted from the physical sciences that are designed to ensure objectivity, generalizability and reliability, it uses numbers and can present finding in the form of graphs and tables, and it conveys a sense of solid, objective research (Weinreich, 1996; Denscombe, 2003).
The criteria for judging qualitative studies can vary depending on purpose. This point is very important because one cannot judge the appropriateness of the methods in any study or the quality of the resulting findings without knowing the study purpose (Patton, 2002).

In practice the good social research is a matter of ‘horses for courses’, where approaches are selected because they are appropriate for specific aspects of investigation and specific kinds of problems. They are chosen as ‘fit for purpose’. The crucial thing for good research is that choices are reasonable and that they are made explicit as part of any research report.

(Denscombe, 2003:3).

Therefore the important aspects in adopting qualitative research is the process which involves making choices about methods and data, on one hand, and asking analytical questions about the data required, on the other (Silverman, 1997).

Accordingly, the researcher is looking to gather a description of the life and world of the interviewee with respect to the interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale, 1993 cited in King, 2004), thus the goal of the interviews is to see the research topic from the interviewee perspective and to see how and why they come to have this particular perspective (King, 2004).

This research will therefore take communication with the hospitality industry and its members as an explicit part of the knowledge production process to build and construct the information to interpret the phenomena, instead of excluding it from other variables (Flick, 1998). The information gathered from interviews will be supported by the information gathered from the secondary sources, such as ministry and institutional documentation.
In summary this qualitative study will be conducted so as to allow phenomena to 'speak for themselves', as little touched or as affected by the preconceptions of the researcher as possible and grounded in people's experiences (Gray, 2004).

4.5.2 Methodology: Using a Case Study: OMAN

Using the case study approach allows the use of a variety of research methods as it is carried in this research, and more or less encourages the use of multiple methods in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny (Denscombe, 2003). With case studies, the researcher has the opportunity to explore in depth and in context, issues, an event, an activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2003; Cassel and Symon, 2004). The term case study methodology is strongly associated with qualitative research. Robson (2002:178) defines a case study as:

\[
a \text{strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.}
\]

One of the main advantages of the case study approach is that it enables the researcher to use different kinds of research methods depending on the context and the research needs (Denscombe, 2003). According to Yin (2003), there are six sources of evidence most commonly used in doing case studies: documents, archival records, observations (direct and participant), open-ended interviews, structured interview and surveys, and focus interviews (Figure 4.5).
Figure 4.5: Sources of Evidence in Case Studies.

Source: Adapted from (Yin, 2003:100)

This research will employ a case study methodology, and the decision to choose the case study strategy was guided by the following facts (Denscombe, 2003; Yin, 2003):

- First, answering the 'how' and 'why' questions in researching are ideally required a special kind of investigation which is a case study in order to collect précised data. Thus, since this research is mainly concerned with answering the questions ‘why Omanis refrain from working in the hotel industry from hotel employers and government officials perspectives?’ ‘how employees sees hospitality careers?’ employing a case study is the most appropriate method;

- Secondly, whenever it is the time to use a case study approach in any research, one of its main features is giving an emphasis on the flexibility in using a variety of researching methods. Therefore, since exploring the issues relating to hotel employment in the Sultanate of Oman is the main aim in this research; the case
study will allow the researcher to use a variety of methods to collect the data and to achieve the intended aims without dictating which methods should be used;

- Furthermore, case studies provide a précised example of a certain phenomenon through advocating thoroughly account of actions, relationships, practice or procedures occurring in that example;

- Finally, through the case study approach, researchers might be able to demonstrate the real life events in a more realistic point of view. Such events might be individual life styles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries.

4.5.2.1 Types of Case Studies

Case studies have been classified into different types and in many different ways. According to Yin (1993), at least six kinds of case studies can be identified based on a 2×3 matrix: so first, the case study can be based on single- or multiple case studies; second, whether single or multiple a case study can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory (causal). A single-case study focuses on a single case only; multiple-case studies however include two or more cases within the same study. And the exploratory study (whether based on single or multiple cases) is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of subsequent study, or at determining the feasibility of the desired research procedures. In other words, the exploratory study aims at gathering information, so a description of what is going on can be made, when the descriptive study present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context, and the explanatory (causal) study presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships-explaining how events happened (Yin, 1993).
Thus it could be said that the types of case studies are: *single and multiple exploratory* case studies, *single and multiple descriptive* case studies, and *single and multiple explanatory* case studies.

In accordance with the three above-mentioned classifications, this case study is “exploratory” in terms of its aim to explore the issues relating to hotel employment in an Islamic/Omani context. It also explores major recruitment and retention challenges facing the hotel sector in Oman, as well as exploring the main social and cultural factors and the Islamic doctrines restraining the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector.

The single case study might be a public programme that involves large numbers of funded projects - which would then be embedded units. These embedded units can be selected through sampling or cluster techniques, and no matter how the units are selected, the resulting design would be called an *embedded case study design* (Yin, 2003). Therefore, an embedded single case study design is applied to this research.

Muscat, the capital of Sultanate of Oman, where the largest numbers of hotels are concentrated is the selected case study for this research. The hotels are the units of analysis, and people in the firm such as government officials, the hotel employees and employers are the sub-units of analysis (figure 4.6).
4.6 Sampling

In addition to the theoretical perspectives and the methods used in the research, decisions must be made about who or what to study. The population for a study is that group (usually of people) about whom we want to be able to draw conclusions (Babbie, 1995).

Even if the researcher is doing a case-study research within a large organisation using in-depth interviews, he/she still needs to select the case-study (sample) organisation and a group (sample) of employees and managers to interview. Techniques for selecting samples will therefore be important (Saunders et al. 1997).

Various authors have identified how qualitative samples are usually small in size, because of the idea that phenomena need only to appear once to be part of the analytical map, so if the data properly analysed, there will come a point where very little new evidence is obtained from each additional field work unit. Therefore increasing the size
of the sample no longer contributes any new evidence (Denscombe, 2003; Ritchie et al., 2003),

Another issue is that the researcher can never fully understand the experience of another person being interviewed, so what matters is how much time and effort the researcher is willing to invest in trying to increase the understanding about any single person's experiences. Therefore choosing an adequate size of sample was subject to different factors; time, facility and effort limitations. To avoid the misrepresentation of the study sample, and to extend the understanding of the information gathered from the interviewees, the researcher might look at a narrow range of experiences for a larger number of people or a broader range of experiences for a smaller number of people, this could be termed as breadth versus depth (Patton, 2002).

The researcher made the decision to choose nine hotels to be studied in order to generate sufficiently rich information, so there will be many 'bites' of information from each unit of data collection (Ritchie et al, 2003).

4.6.1 Sampling Technique for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research deals with a small number of instances to be researched. It cannot use principles of randomness, or operate with large numbers. For some researchers, the selection of people or events for inclusion in the sample tends to be based on non-probability sampling (Denscombe, 2003).

In social research, basically there are two kinds of sampling techniques that can be used; probability or representative sampling and non-probability or judgmental sampling (Saunders et al. 1997; Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Denscombe, 2003).
Probability sampling is most commonly associated with survey-based research where the researcher need to make inferences for the sample about a population to answer the research question(s) or meet his/her objectives (Saunders et al., 1997). Whereas non-probability sampling is often used in the situation where probability sampling techniques are either impractical or unnecessary and therefore in these situations, cheaper, less resource-intensive, non-probability techniques may be used (Brewerton and Millward, 2001).

The justification for non-probability sampling in qualitative research is one of ‘discovery’ rather than the testing of hypotheses (Denscombe, 2003; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003). Burns (2000:465) adds; the non-probability sampling is more often applied in a case study.

Using non-probability sampling in qualitative research means that the units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of or group within the sampled population. The sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003).

The non-probability sampling techniques can be classified as; “purposive sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling”. Burns (2000) and Saunders et al. (1997) refers to purposive or purposeful or criterion-based sampling as the usual form of non-probability sampling, but purposive is the term most commonly used in the literature (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003). Purposive sampling is precisely
what the name suggests. Members of a sample are chosen with a ‘purpose’ to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion (Ritchie et al, 2003).

4.6.2 Sampling Technique for this Study

In this research, two types of non-probability sampling were used to achieve the objectives of study. Snowballing is an effective technique for building up a reasonable-sized sample, the accumulation of numbers is quite quick, using the multiplier effect of one person nominating two or more others (Denscombe, 2003).

Another advantage of the snowball technique is that it is completely compatible with purposive sampling. People nominated by others can meet certain criteria for choice, certain condition, and certain characteristics related to the research project such as age, sex, ethnicity, qualifications, residence, and state of health or leisure pursuits (Denscombe, 2003).

Therefore to achieve objective three of this research, the interviews were done in two stages. The first stage was interviewing different tourism experts and consultants, tourism academics, and government officials, for this stage a snowball (Brewerton and Millward, 2001) sample technique was used. Each person the researcher interviewed was asked who else might be willing to be interviewed about the topic.

The snowball technique was used in conducting the interviews to collect the data about the role of the ministries and the institution in educating the human resource capital to enter the labour market with the required skills and qualifications. This was a very helpful way of gaining access to people who, without such a personal contact, might otherwise refuse to be interviewed (Seale and Filmer, 2001).
In stage two of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with hotel employers and hotel employees. The sample chosen was purposive (Saunders et al., 1997), where the researcher already knew something about the specific people, and deliberately selected particular ones because they are seen as those that are likely to produce the most valuable data (Denscombe, 2003).

The human resource managers were selected from the total number of hotels according to the researcher’s underlying interest in these particular groups (Brewerton and Millward, 2001), and they were selected with a specific purpose in mind which reflects the particular qualities of the people chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation. The advantage of using purposive sampling in this research is that it allows the researcher to focus on people or events which have strong evidence to suggest that they will be critical for the research, in this sense this way will be not only economical for the researcher, but also informative in a way that conventional probability sampling cannot be (Denscombe, 2003).

The purposive sampling technique was also used with hotel employees. Although, the hotel employees interviewed in this research were chosen by the hotel employers, selection criteria: they were Omani-only, mixed numbers of males and females, and from managerial and operative levels. The number of the employees was appointed by the employers according to the willingness of the employers to allow the researcher to interview the employees. The time of the interview was limited according to the allowed time by the employers and the employers’ restrictions with regards to the interviews. Therefore, the interviews were directed by the employers in terms of the time and the
subject discussed. In some hotels, the employees revealed that their employers were keen to meet them before the interviews to give them instructions about the subject.

To conduct the interviews, a sample of nine hotels was chosen to be studied. The total number of hotels in Oman is 153 hotels (Ministry of National Economy, 2005), distributed across all regions in the country. The largest number of hotels is concentrated in the capital (Muscat), where there are 60 hotels (Ministry of National Economy, 2005), ranging between five-stars to two-stars, plus others. The number of five-star hotels was five hotels, four-star hotels were nine hotels and the three-star hotels were eight hotels. (See appendix 1).

The interviews were done with human resource managers and employees in the five, four and three-star hotels. Three of each class was chosen to be studied. Two of the hotels are supported by the Government, i.e.: Public sector hotel one is a five-star hotel and the other is a four-star hotel and the rest are private sector hotels, with private ownership.

4.6.2 Representativeness of the Qualitative Sample

The issue of sample representativeness is critical in impact evaluations. Biases can occur if the sample does not represent the participant population, or if non-participant sample does not represent the participant population. Representativeness expresses the degree to which sample data accurately and precisely represents a characteristic of a population’s, parameter variations at a sampling point (Telhaj et al, 2004).

According to Denscombe (2003:36) although each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things. Although Muscat the capital of the
Sultanate where the research was conducted enjoys more of a modern life and technologies than the other regions in the country, however, Omani society across the country is a homogenous culture. People in Oman share a common Arab, Muslim, and tribal culture in most of the regions. They believe in the same religion- Islam- and trust the same culture (see section 3.2.4). Therefore, the researcher believes that the sample of the research is representative of the national population according to the similarities of Omani society structure across the country. The researcher also believes that the findings of this research could be more applicable to the interiors and regions far from Muscat because the further the regions are from Muscat, the more conservative they are.

### 4.7 Methods of Data Collection

To achieve the aim of the research, a range of techniques were employed using qualitative methods which implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meaning that are not experimentally examined or measured (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

In case study research, different sources of evidence were used to collect the data such as; documents and archival records, and semi-structured interviews with Omani hotel employers, employees and government officials (figure 4.7)
However no one single source of evidence has a complete advantage over all the others, the various sources are highly complementary, and a good study will therefore need to use as many sources as possible (Yin, 2003). Therefore, this research included semi-structured interviews, which were carried out with nine government officials from Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Manpower, tourism academics from Sultan Qaboos University and College of Tourism. Other interviews were also carried out with nine employers from five, four and three-star hotels, and twenty-seven hotel employees in Oman. Another source also used was in-depth analysis of the government’s documents and archival records, such as the Omanisation plan for the tourism sector, the five-year
development plan for the country’s economy and statistics from the Ministry of National of Economy about the number of hotels and Omani employees working in the hotels.

4.7.1 Document and Archival Material Analysis

In the social sciences, library-based research, desk research, black letter research and archive research are all types of research in which the data comes from documents of one kind or another. Therefore, documents can be treated as a source of data in their own right - in effect an alternative to questionnaires, interviews or observation (Denscombe, 2003).

According to Burns (2000), case study investigators are likely to use a variety of documents in their research. They would include letters, agendas, minutes, administrative reports, files, books, diaries, budgets, news clippings, photographs, lists of employees/pupils, etc. It is important to bear in mind that these documents may not be accurate or may lack bias, and they have been written for a specific purpose with a specific audience in mind. Although the fact that many are deliberately edited before issue, they are important as another source of evidence derived from other sources.

*Some of the richest sources of data bearing on social, psychological, and behavioural processes are the records and written materials produced in the course of everyday life. Vast stored of records and texts are continually being generated in every literate society: traffic statistics, newspapers, crime reports, speeches, marriage license applications, magazine articles, unemployment statistics, televisions scripts, factory production data, and much more*  

(Jones, 1996: 103).
Chapter Four: Research Approach

Any documents contain an incredible storehouse of information about all aspects of the nation's past: government, laws, people, wars, and economics (Bell, 1993).

The documents can be divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are those which came into existence in the period under research, but secondary sources are interpretations of events of that period based on primary sources (Bell, 1993).

In this research, the data collected from the materials from different sources such as ministries and institutions helped to achieve objective two about the context of the Sultanate of Oman and tourism development in the country. It also helped to gather the data with regards to the number of Omanis and non-Omanis working in hospitality industry, and showed the application of the Omanisation Plan in the tourism industry in general and hotel sector specifically. It also reflected the efforts of the Omani government in this sector. The amount of documentary material studied for this research was influenced by the amount of time that was available for this stage of the research.

4.7.2 Interviews: Objective Three

According to Patton (2002), researchers use interviews with people usually to find out from them those things which cannot be directly observed. Researchers often build interviews into a research design almost automatically, because asking people questions on the face of it, and in the light of our experiences in our daily life, is such an obvious way of finding out what people think, feel or believe (Bechofer and Paterson, 2000).

Although conducting an interview is a much harder task than it may seem at first. The spoken or written word has always the chance of ambiguity no matter how carefully the questions were worded, and answers were reported or coded. Yet, interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful techniques used by researchers to try to
understand fellow human beings, and to allow the interviewer to enter into the other person’s perspective (Fontana and Frey, 1998; Patton, 2003).

4.7.2.1 Types of Interviews

"Interviews can take a variety of forms depending on the types of data required to inform the research question being asked, as well on the availability of resources" (Brewerton and Millward, 2001:69).

Denscombe (2003) classified interviews as structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews involve control over the format of the questions and answers; resembling a questionnaire which is administered face-to-face with a respondent. In this type of interview, the researcher has a predetermined list of questions, to which the respondent is invited to offer limited option responses, and each respondent is faced with identical questions. The use of structured interviews is often associated with social surveys where researchers are trying to collect large volumes of data from a wide range of respondents (Denscombe 2003; Yin 2003).

According to Saunders et al. (1997) unstructured interviews are informal, so the role of the researcher in this type is to start the ball rolling by introducing a theme or topic and then letting the interviewee develop his or her ideas and pursue his or her train of thought (Denscombe, 2003). An alternate term to this type of interviews is in-depth interviews as the researcher try to explore in depth a general area in which he or she interested (Saunders et al. 1997).

The third type of interview is the semi-structured interview. With this type of interview, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be
answered. However with this type of interview the interviewer is prepared to be more flexible in terms of the order in which topics are considered, and more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issue raised by the researcher (Denscombe, 2003).

Conducting this type of interview may have a positive impact as it is accessible for analysis; it gives more opportunities for interviewees to justify their responses and give more precise information if necessary and may give negative impacts as too much time might be spent on unimportant subjects (Brewerton and Millward, 2001). It can sometimes be hard to control the interviewee, and might reduce the amount of reliability when using non-standardised measures to interview each respondent (Brewerton and Millward, 2001).

“What distinguishes structured from semi-structured and unstructured interviews is the degree of control exercised by the researcher over the nature of the responses and the length of the answers allowed by the respondent” (Denscombe, 2003:167).

Semi-structured or unstructured interviews can be classified to different types. According to Denscombe (2003), the most common form is the one-to-one variety, which involves a meeting between one researcher and one informant. The first reason for its popularity is that, it is easy to arrange, only two peoples diaries need to correspond. In other words, it is much easier to set the meeting time for two persons rather than a group of people. Another advantage for this type of interview is that the opinion and views expressed throughout the interview stem from one source, the interviewee, which makes it fairly straightforward for the researcher to locate specific ideas from specific people, and the third advantage is that in a one-to-one interview the
Chapter Four: Research Approach

researcher only has one person’s ideas to grasp and interrogate, and one person to guide through the interview agenda, so it is relatively easy to control.

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews have as their aim ‘discovery’ rather than ‘checking’. They lend themselves to in-depth investigations, particularly those that explore personal accounts of experiences and feeling (Denscombe, 2003).

In this research, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were deemed to be an ideal instrument to accomplish the research objectives, and all of the interviews were conducted in Oman for a number of reasons;

- The main focus of the study is Oman, therefore the research must be conducted in Oman;
- Oman is one of the developing countries trying to diversify its economy, maximise the utilisation of natural resources and attractions, and provide social welfare for the population;
- Oman is placing great emphasis on the Omanisation Plan for tourism industry as part of economic diversification; and
- The researcher is a native of Oman, holding a position in Sultan Qaboos University, and has wide contacts within the government and private sector. This facilitated easy access to data collection.

4.7.3 Stages of the Interviews to Achieve Objective Three

The interviews were conducted to achieve objective three of the key research which was to explore the human resource issues faced by Omani hotel employers, and the socio-cultural factors and Islamic doctrine that hinder Omanis from working in the hotel
industry in order to illustrate barriers to hospitality employment, and the paradoxical link between selection of tourism as a vehicle for diversification of the Omani economy in the context of the Omanisation Plan. To achieve the aim, the interviews were conducted in two different stages as follows:

a) Stage One of the Interviews

Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of tourism consultants, tourism academics and government officials (Table 4.1). The interviews were conducted in Muscat, in August 2006. A number of themes were covered in the interviews, such as; the extent of the implementation of Omanisation Plan and the obstacles facing the government during the implementation. Another issue discussed was the preference of Omanis to work in the Public rather than the Private sector. The research also explored the education and training provided by the government to qualify the Omanis to enter the tourism and hospitality industry labour market.

- All of them were conducted in the Arabic language, the official language of the country. The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to two hours according to the answers of the interviewee and the time he/she allowed. The interview was oriented toward encouraging the interviewees to express their opinions, getting the information about the status of Omani employees in the hotel sector and the implication of and strategies for Omanisation of the sector.

- All of the participants were informed about the aim of the study, the procedures to be followed, and how the findings would be used. The participants were assured about the confidentiality of the comments made during the interview to make them feel free to open up about the topic under consideration. It was also
emphasised to the interviewees that they were under no obligation to participate in the study and that taking part was voluntary. Permission was taken from the participants to record the discussion. It was also made clear to all participants that they had the right to discontinue the interview whenever they wished to do so.

Table 4.1: Number of Interview with Tourism Experts and Government officials (Stage One)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism consultants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>TC (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism academics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>TA (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Manpower consultant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>MPC (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Stage Two of the Interviews

Nine interviews were conducted between July and August 2006 with nine hotel human resources managers (Table 4.2). They were conducted in five, four and three-star hotels in the capital of Oman, Muscat, where the largest number of hotels are concentrated.

Two of the nine hotels are public hotels owned by the government but managed by international companies, such as Al-Bustan Intercontinental and Golden Tulip. Seven hotels are private hotels owned by private companies, with some managed by international companies.

The researcher planned to conduct the interviews in twelve hotels, four from each classification. But only nine of them agreed to do the interviews. The meetings with the
managers were not easy to organise, especially with human resource managers in the five and four-star hotels. Although interviewees were informed that the interview was for research purposes were assured that their identities would remain private and confidential, some of the managers did not like to be interviewed. They were hesitant when talking, reluctant to speak on certain subjects such as the government policies regarding employees’ salaries, and their Islamic perspective of hotel jobs, and preferred to write their answers in a paper format instead of talking and recording the interview. But after talking to them they felt that it was not like a formal interview it was more of a conversation, so they felt more comfortable and talked freely.

As a Muslim woman in an Islamic country with certain social and Islamic codes the researcher was keen to conduct the interviews in an environment which does not conflict with Islamic reservations and social values. The researcher was also aware of the cultural issues about women sitting with a strange man alone which might be misinterpreted or a subject of society gossip against the woman.

The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder; each of them took from 45 minutes to two hours depending on the time he/she allowed. Some of the interviews were conducted in Arabic with the Arabic language native speakers, such as Omanis, and Egyptian hotel human resource managers. So with Omanis and Arab managers questions were asked in Arabic although sometimes they used some English words when they spoke. With the expatriate human resource managers, the interviews were conducted in the English language. The English language for the expatriate was not their first language which the researcher was aware of and tried to clarify the questions of the interviews accordingly to avoid misinterpretation of the questions.
Another twenty-seven interviews were conducted in August 2007 with hotel employees from the same hotels (Table 4.2). Of the twelve hotels two of the hotels were closed for construction reasons after the Cyclone hit the country in June 2007.

To cover the shortage of the interviews, the researcher increased the number of employees to be interviewed from other hotels.

They were all conducted with Omani employees, and in the Arabic language. The same procedures were followed to conduct the interviews. The interviews lasted from 15 minutes to one hour, depending on the employees’ willingness to talk.

Table 4.2: Number of Interviews with Hotel Human Resource Managers and Hotel Employees (Stage Two)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Star</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Managers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Employees</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 Transcribing and Translating the Interviews

Before transcription, the researcher listened to the tapes several times in order to become familiar with the general impressions about the participant's perceptions, attitudes, opinions, feelings and their values. Some of the interviews were conducted in Arabic and some of them in English. With the interviews conducted in Arabic, they were transcribed in Arabic, and then the Arabic transcriptions were analysed in Arabic,
then translated into English. The analysis was done in Arabic before the translation to give the text more credibility of interpretation by the interviewer.

Transcribing the data collected is very time-consuming, every hour of talk on the tape took seven more to transcribe. However, transcribing is a very valuable part of the research, because it brings the interview to life, and is a real asset when it comes to using interviews for qualitative data (Denscombe, 2003). The researcher was keen to transcribe the interviews to enable a deeper understanding of the data, and to be more familiar with the participants' perceptions before identifying the common themes from the gathered data. The English translation was checked by an independent colleague from Cardiff University.

4.9 Coding

After the transcription and the translation of the interviews, the next step was coding the participants of the interviews as follows:

4.9.1 Coding Government officials:

1 - Coding Tourism Academics

Tourism academics were coded by the code (TA) followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the participants, followed by a dash followed by a letter 'M' for males and letter 'F' for females. For example the code for a male tourism academic will be (TA1-M) for the first interviewee, and for the second interviewee (TA2-M), and for the first female tourism academic was (TA1-F).
2- Coding Tourism Consultants

Tourism consultants were coded by the code (TC) followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the participants, followed by a dash followed by a letter 'M' for males and 'F' for females. For example, the code for the first and second male tourism consultant will be like this (TC1-M) and (TC2-M) respectively.

3- Coding Consultants from Ministry of Manpower

Consultant from the Ministry of Manpower were coded by the code (MPC) followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the interviewee, followed by a dash followed by a letter 'M' for males and 'F' for females. For example, the code for male consultant from Ministry of Manpower is (MPC1-M). (MPC1-F) is for the female consultant.

4.9.2 Coding Hotel Human Resource Managers

Human resource managers from the hotels were coded by the code (H), referring to hotel, followed by a classification of the hotel, five or four or three stars, followed by a dash followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the interviewee, followed by a letter 'M' for males and 'F' for females. For example, for the first male interviewee from five stars hotel, the code was (H5-1M).

4.9.3 Coding Hotel Employees

Employees interviewed were codes by the (HE) followed by the hotel class, five or four or three stars, followed by a dash followed by a serial number referring to the sequence of the participant, followed by a letter 'M' for males and 'F' for females. For instance,
for the first female interviewee from five stars hotel, the code was (HE5-1F), and for the first male from four stars hotel, the code was (HE4-1M).

4.10 Analysing the Interviews
Analysis of the interviews was done in different stages. The first stage was reading through the interviews more than once to have an in-depth understanding of the interview. The second stage was identifying the key themes that emerged from the interviews. In this stage the researcher was trying to be as close as possible to the text, and used the words of the person without using any theoretical concepts.

The following stage was reformulating the words in more theoretical concepts, as well as condensing the large volume of information and categorising the key themes of the interview. Kvale (1996) describes five analysis methods which include; 1) meaning condensation, 2) meaning categorisation, 3) narrative structuring, 4) meaning interpretation, and 5) generating meaning through ad-hoc methods.

4.11 Ethical Consideration
The most important ethical principle governing data collection is that no harm should come to the respondents as a result of their participation in the research (Oppenheim, 2000). There is also the related issue of confidentiality. Those who advocate research usually do so with the condition that reports conceal names, locations, and other identifying information so that the people who have been interviewed or observed will be protected from harm (Patton, 2002). As far as the researcher is more directly focused on reality of the study rather than action, the subjects’ identity would certainly remain protected (Patton, 2002).
Christians (2005) suggests that different elements should be considered for proper human respect while doing the research.

- Informed consent. Research subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved. Two necessary conditions should be included for proper human respect purposes. Firstly, the research participant should voluntarily agree to participate, without any force, neither physical nor psychological. Secondly, their agreement must be based on full and open information such as the duration, methods, possible risks, and the purpose or aim of the research or experiment. This was an issue for some participants as they were reluctant to participate. However, open discussion between the interviewers and the interviewee overcome this issue by assuring them that the information and their identities will be coded and the information they provide will not be used against them;

- Deception is considered as morally unacceptable; it is neither justified nor practically necessary;

- Privacy and confidentiality must be considered during the research. All personal data of the participant or the subject must be secured and if revealed to the public this should be only behind a shield of ambiguity;

- Accuracy. One of the important ethical codes is the data must be accurate fabrications, fraudulent materials, omissions, and contrivances are unacceptable and unethical;

So the respondents and the participants have the right to refuse to answer certain questions, or to be interviews at all, and they should always be respected, it is an important safeguard (Burns, 2000; Oppenheim, 2000).
No-one should be forced to participate in the research if he/she is not willing to. However, in some cases where the interviewer informs the interviewees that their participation in the research is voluntary, it is often taken that if they participate in the research they might benefit from their cooperation or it might be taken that if they do not participate in the research it might affect their work if they are employees or their grade if they are students (Babbie, 1998). In this research the participants were informed that whether they participate or not, it will not affect their work.

Social research should never harm or injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study. Revealing information from the participants may embarrass them or endanger their home life, friendships, jobs, and so forth, so the researcher must look for the subtlest dangers and guard against them (Babbie, 1998).

4.12 Reliability, Validity and Triangulation

4.12.1 Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability refers to whether the operation of a study - such as the data collection procedures - can be repeated, with the same results (Yin, 2003). According to Denscombe (2003), the researcher’s self in the qualitative research is an integral part of the research instrument, so the reliability can be transformed into the question: if someone else did the research would he or she have gotten the same results and arrived at the same conclusion? Similarly, Kvale (1989:79) holds that “reliability is a question of whether repeated investigations of the same phenomenon will give the same result. In another words, the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology,
then the research instrument is considered to be reliable” (Joppe, 2000 cited in Golafshani, 2003:598).

Examination of trustworthiness is crucial to ensure the reliability of the qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). While establishing good quality studies through reliability and validity in qualitative research, Seal (1999) cited in Golafshani (2003:601) states that the "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability".

In this current study, reliability has been judged by;

- Asking the same question to the interviewees in different ways.
- Multiple listening to the recorded interviews.
- Multiple transcriptions of recorded interviews.
- The accurate analysis of the interview in away to be able to understand the accurate meaning of the interviewees words to which the research result made sense.

4.12.2 Validity

Issues of validity are appropriate whatever one’s theoretical orientation or whether one is using quantitative or qualitative data (Silverman, 2001). Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about (Saunders et al, 2003).

While some scholars consider that reliability and generalisability play minor roles in qualitative inquiry, validity on the other hand is seen as a strength of qualitative research, but it is used to determine whether the finding are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the reader (Creswell, 2003).
Different methods were applied to ensure validity in this research such as:

- Divergence from initial expectations by checking personal notes kept from the beginning to see how the data has been changed from initial assumptions;
- Convergence with other sources of data by using various kinds of triangulation and comparisons with the literature to check the extent to which the findings and conclusions fitted with existing knowledge;
- Extensive quotations from field notes, transcripts of interviews, other notes;
- Other research data being used such as archival data, and recordings of the interviews;
- To avoid the misunderstanding of translation of the interviews as some of them were conducted in Arabic; another source of verification used was independent checks by a colleague from another university.

To address the issue of internal validity the researcher used more than one method of data collection to answer the research questions (Barbour, 2001) such as; semi-structured interviews with different groups to get different perspectives of the phenomenon and analysis of the documents from different sources such as ministries and institutions.

4.12.3 Triangulation

The use of multiple sources of evidence in the case study approach, allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues, and the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry. Thus any finding or conclusion in a case study is like to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information (Yin, 2003). The ghosts of reliability and validity continue to
Chaoter Four: Research Approach

haunt qualitative methodology and different researchers in the field have approached the problem in a number of different ways (Armstrong et al. 1997). Using different data sources and analytical perspectives will increase the accuracy and credibility of findings (Patton, 2002). The one strategy for addressing these issues of reliability and validity is that of ‘triangulation’.

Triangulation means looking at the same phenomenon or research question from more than one source of data; gathered information can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research problem. Data triangulation entails the use of a variety of data sources such as primary and secondary data. This means comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived from different sources of data at different times (Patton, 2002).

“Triangulation provides social researchers with a means for assessing the quality of data by coming at the same thing from a different angle” (Denscombe, 2002:104).

According to Fontana and Frey (2005) humans are complex, and their lives are changing, so the more methods the researcher uses to study them and to understand their perspectives and feelings, the better the chances will be to gain some understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell the researcher.

Triangulation in qualitative research can take four forms; firstly, triangulation of data involves the convergence of multiple data sources drawn from different sources at different times in different places or from different people. The second form is investigator triangulation which is characterised by the use of different observers or interviewers, to balance out the subjective influences of the individual (Flick, 2004). The third form is “triangulation of theories, which means approaching data with
*multiple perspectives and hypotheses in mind*, here various theoretical points of view could be placed side by side to assess their utility and power (Denzin, 1978:297). The final form is *methodological triangulation*, which involves the convergence of data from multiple data collection sources (Denzin, 1978).

In this research triangulation allowed the researcher to look at the phenomena from different angles, and enriched the information gathered. The researcher therefore used data triangulation by gathering the information from different groups of respondents; government officials, human resource managers and hotel employees.

### 4.13 Generalisability of Results

One aim of the qualitative approach is to increase understanding of a phenomenon as opposed to generalising data extrapolated from the sample to the population at large (Marshal, 1996; Byrne, 2001). Although the case study approach has the potential to deal with the subtleties and details of complex social situations, the social researcher is likely to confront scepticism about the findings which arise from the doubts about how far it is reasonable to generalise from the findings of one case (Denscombe, 2003).

Maxwell (2005) argued that qualitative studies are not always ungeneralisable beyond the setting or informants studied. First, qualitative studies often have (personal communication) called “faced generalisability”, and that there is no reason not to believe that the result apply more generally. Second, qualitative studies is usually based not on explicit sampling of some defined population to which the results can be extended, but on the development of a *theory* that can be extended to other cases. Third, there are some features that lend plausibility to generalisation from case studies.
including, respondents own assessments of generalisability, the similarity of dynamics and constraints to other situations, the presumed depth or universality of the phenomenon studied, and corroboration from other studies. All of these characteristics can provide credibility to generalisations from qualitative studies, but none permits the kinds of precise extrapolation of results to defined populations that probability sampling allows (Maxwell, 2005).

According to Silverman (2006) generalising from case studies is less of a problem than is usually assumed, and can be increased by purposive sampling guided by time and resources, and theoretical sampling. He also noted two positive answers to the question on how our choice of cases to study can accommodate issues of generalisability; purposive sampling guided by time and resources, and theoretical sampling.

In this research, purposive sampling was used with hotel employers and hotel employees. Purposive sampling allows to choose a case that illustrates some features or process in which the researcher is interested (Silverman, 2006). In other words, the choice of the hotels in this study was based on choosing different hotels in the area with different features, such as classification of the hotels; five, four and three stars hotel, and type of ownership of hotels; public or private, different type of jobs; managerial and operational levels, and mixed gender; males and females. So sampling in qualitative research is neither statistical nor purely personal: it is, or should be, theoretically grounded (Silverman, 2006). This means that theoretical sampling is selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to research question, theoretical positions which help and test the research theory and explanation (Mason, 1996 in Silverman, 2006).
Mason (1996 in Silverman, 2006:304) stated that qualitative research should therefore produce explanation which are generalisable in some way, or which have a wider resonance.

Notwithstanding that this research aims to explore and understand the phenomenon of Omani refraining from working in the hotel industry, using a non-probability sampling (purposive and snowball sampling). Yet according to the sample representativeness of the population (section 4.6.2), and according to the relevance of the group and categories chosen to the research questions and theoretical positions, the results and the findings of this research is generalisable and can be applied to other regions in the country.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONSTRAINTS TO OMANISATION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 229
5.2 Main Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry .................................... 230
5.3 Employment Issues .............................................................................................. 231
  5.3.1 Recruitment and Selection ............................................................................. 231
  5.3.2 High Labour Turnover and Poor Staff Retention ......................................... 237
  5.3.3 Lack of Job Continuity and Job Security ....................................................... 244
  5.3.4 Low Remuneration ....................................................................................... 247
  5.3.5 Poor Working Conditions .............................................................................. 251
5.4 Education and Training Issues ............................................................................ 252
  5.4.1 Qualifications and Training .......................................................................... 252
  5.4.2 Cost of Training ............................................................................................. 256
  5.4.3 Skills Gaps and Skills Shortage ..................................................................... 259
  5.4.4 Lack of Foreign Language Skills ................................................................... 261
5.5 Cultural and Social Issues .................................................................................... 263
  5.5.1 Religious Issues .............................................................................................. 263
    a) Unlawful Food and Beverages ......................................................................... 264
    b) Unlawful Activities ........................................................................................... 266
    c) Source of Income ............................................................................................. 267
    d) Mixing Between Males and Females ................................................................ 268
    e) Female Outfit .................................................................................................... 271
  5.5.2 Family and Social Attitudes towards Hospitality Careers ............................ 272
    a) Region of Origin ............................................................................................... 273
    b) Family Influence on Career Choice .................................................................. 274
    c) Family Obligations ............................................................................................ 276
    d) Marriage Opportunity ...................................................................................... 278
  5.5.3 Image of Hospitality Careers amongst Omani Society ................................ 279
  5.5.4 Hospitality Career Reputation ........................................................................ 282
5.7 Summary ................................................................................................................ 287
CHAPTER FIVE: CONSTRAINTS TO OMANISATION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

5.1 Introduction

The reality of the hotel industry is that it is not always seen as an attractive place to work. The work is physical, the working hours are long, the working conditions are not always the best, the busiest times are weekends and holidays, and the pay scales stay pretty close to the minimum wage. Accordingly, students may wonder what they are doing working on a degree in hospitality administration! But this idea is very outdated. Working within a sector of the hospitality industry does not have to be, and should not be, like the scenario that has just been described (Tanke, 2000). However, the situation in the Sultanate of Oman is not better than what has been mentioned according to the results revealed from the field work. In the Sultanate, a number of organisations as well as the tourism and hospitality industry (including hotels) and government departments, recruit expatriates in different jobs such as; reception, restaurant and kitchen, technical support, chefs, which require language skills, work experience, customer service skills and the right attitude. Nevertheless, those from overseas are often preferred by employers because they are more willing to work for lower wages than local workers and because of a belief that such individuals are more willing to undertake uncongenial and physically-demanding tasks (Sadi and Henderson, 2005).

This research therefore tried to unveil the issues and reasons hinder Omanis from working in the hotel industry, and answer the question of why Omanis refrain from working in the hotel sector. The research also tried to explain why employers resort to
recruit expatriates in hotels rather than Omanis, which therefore, obstruct the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the sector.

The findings from the field work reflect the conflict between the government efforts to Omanise the job in the hotel industry, and the perception of the hotel jobs amongst the people being interviewed due to Islamic influences and cultural values, particularly with regards to the service nature of the industry, which is considered to be a servile job.

5.2 Main Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

It has been noted in section 3.11 and figure 3.14 that there are different forces driving the country to implement the Omanisation Plan in all sectors in general, and in tourism and hotel industry specifically. These forces are: the finite nature of oil as the OER (2004) revealed that Oman has just over 17 years of oil production left before oil reserves are depleted. This reason drove the country to diversify its economy to lessen the reliance on oil and create a national economy based on increasing private enterprise. The Government therefore focuses on three areas. The first area is basic industry, mainly in the mineral sector. The second area of development is agriculture. Fishing is also a major area of expansion. Tourism is another sector identified by the government as offering significant growth potential.

The diversification of the economy to rely on tourism as a significant sector is set to increase its contribution to GDP to 5% by the end of 2020 (Ministry of National Economy, 2001), and create more jobs for the annual increasing number of high schools and colleges graduates. This in turn will decrease the unemployment ratio amongst Omanis as well as decreasing the number of expatriate workers in the country, to reduce
the cultural, political and economical impact of the high presence of expatriates in the country.

This chapter identifies a number of findings from the fieldwork in the hotel sector. It illustrates the issues from different perspectives including government officials, tourism consultants, tourism academics, hotel employers, and hotel employees.

The main key issues found were the staff turnover and poor retention, skills gaps, lack of qualified employees, low remuneration, and many others similar to the issues facing the hotel industry globally. However, the Omani society as an Islamic and Arabic country makes some of the findings of this research distinct from other western and more developed countries in some respects.

The researcher classified the main constraints and barriers to Omanisation in the hospitality industry in three different categories starting with employment issues. The second category is education and training issues, and the third is cultural and social issues. These issues are common issue across the world, however in terms of religion; these issues can be only unique to Arab and Muslim countries. Notwithstanding, these issues are shared by other Arab and Muslim countries, yet, the extent of applying these principles varies from person to another and from country to another.

5.3 Employment Issues

5.3.1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment methods varied across the hospitality sector and depend on the firm size, however, in both small and large firms the recruitment methods include formal methods, such as press advertisement, jobcentres and other agencies, and more informal methods,
such as recommendations from existing staff (Carroll et al, 1999). According to various authors (Saari et al, 1988; Carroll et al, 1999) large organisations adopt more formalised approach to recruitment; this is in response to institutional pressures and economies that can be made through larger and more frequent recruitment. On the other hand, small organisations generally prefer to use a more informal approach to recruitment and selection of personnel (Barber et al, 1999; Carroll et al, 1999).

Analysis of interviews with hotel human resource managers in the Sultanate of Oman revealed that hotels use different methods of recruitment and selection. These methods varied from one hotel to another according to the hotel classification and hotel size.

Chain five-star hotels and some of the four-star hotels use a number of different methods, such as internal advertising, newspaper advertisements. Internet advertisements with hotel branches in other countries are another method. Thus, the recruitment procedures reflect more formal recruitment methods. One of the human resource managers noted that:

\[
\text{We recruit through advertising in the newspaper or our websites on the net, and then we take the applicants CVs and select the right person for the vacant position.}
\]

(H5-1M)

They also give consideration to whether the vacancies are to be filled internally or externally (Cheng and Brown, 1998). So if the job vacancies can be filled internally, they try to find the employee within the establishment and from other hotels which are part of the chain within the same ownership. This usually happens for promotional opportunities as well as transfers of casual and part-time staff depending on workforce requirements, and for supervisory positions and above, associated with career development plan. One of the human resource managers stated that:
If we know that the job can be filled internally, so we always try to find the right person within the firm, we also recruit internally if we are promoting any of our employees.

(H5-3M)

In contrast, most of the three star hotels think that it costs a lot to recruit the employees through formal methods, so instead they use informal methods.

Putting advertisement in the newspapers will cost the hotel too much; therefore we recruit our employees based on the recommendations of some managers or employee’s friends.

(H3-2M)

Three star hotels also show that they recruit their employees through recommendations from existing staff, and word of mouth. Word-of-mouth is one of the most common methods of recruiting operational staff in the hospitality industry (Goldsmith et al, 1997). They believe that these methods have more advantages in terms of cost and speed and better than recruiting qualified staff and pay them high wages. So they tend to recruit more through recommendations of people who have social relations with the hotel manager or other trusted staff (e.g. friends and relatives), or through recommendations from skilled workers as illustrated below:

Some of our skilled workers recommend new workers for the hotel when they hear that we need to recruit new workers.

(H4-1M)

The word-of-mouth method is considered to be one of the most common methods in five, four and three star hotel. However two of the three five star hotels used this method to recruit staff in specific job categories such as housekeeping, telephone operators, and doormen. One hotel human resource manager comments on this effectiveness:

We always use formal methods to recruit our employees, however this does not mean that we do not use the informal methods, or we do not
recruit through a recommendation of any of our employees for new workers as their friends or relatives or their acquaintances, but this is only for certain jobs, such as housekeepers, cleaners, telephone operators.

(H5-1M)

The walk-in method is another recruitment method in some hotels. A human resource manager stated:

Some applicants just walk into the hotel and drop their CVs, and ask if we have any job vacancies, and if we do not have any vacancies at that time, we take their applications and contact them when we need them according to their interest and if their qualifications match with the job available.

(H5-2M)

These aforementioned informal methods have distinct advantages such as: the speed and cost, and familiarity as the new recruit is a “known quantity”. He or she is likely to have been given more prior knowledge about the firm and the job, and what to expect from it. Furthermore, existing employees who have recommended people tend to “socialize” with the new recruit because it is in their interests to make sure that the employee fits in (Carroll et al, 1999).

Cost is also a key determinant of recruitment policies. The preference for using informal methods in some hotels could be because employees hired through informal contacts have lower salaries as compared to those hired through other entry channels (Mosca and Pastore, 2008). This issue is raised by a four-star hotel employee who has been recruited informally as a housekeeper and had accepted low wages as alternative to being unemployed for a long period of time.

I have been working here for four months, and I know the wage I started with is less than the minimum wage, but when my friend recommended me to work in the hotel, I agreed because it is better to find a job even with low wage instead of being unemployed at all.

(HE4-8M)
Informal methods seemed to be preferred by hotel employers in five stars hotel for some jobs, and for four and three star hotels in most of the jobs. Despite the shortcoming of informal recruitment methods, many tourism-related sectors in developed and developing countries continue to embrace these methods. In their research, Haven-Tang et al (2004) noted that 74% of employers in the tourism and related sectors in Wales use word-of-mouth and personal recommendation for recruitment.

Another method of recruiting employees is through government channels, as some of the high school leavers get trained in some institutions for a period of time, such as through NVQs, where they sign a contract to work in hotels or in the hospitality sector. The Ministry of Manpower has a list of these graduates and when they have a vacancy, either in the public or private sector, they call in the applicants and fill the vacancies appropriately with these candidates.

A human resource manager stated that:

In some cases, we contact the Ministry of Manpower to check with them if they have any applications or CVs of any applicants. We interview them and choose the right person for the right position.

(H4-3M)

This was supported by a female manpower consultant:

The Ministry provides the high school graduate with NVQs and they sign a contract with the Ministry that they have to work for at least six months after they finish their training.

(MPC3-F)

Some of the hotel human resource managers mentioned that they do not recruit many of the graduates, as they will have to pay them more than if they recruit high school leavers.
For other jobs which require more skills they recruit expatriates which will cost them less than if they recruit locals. This reflects the low wage ethos of the industry.

We prefer to recruit high school leavers, and train them for short period of time, and their salaries are less than the college or universities graduates. For the jobs which require high skill we recruit expatriates as their salaries are less.

(H4-3M)

A tourism academic consultant asserted that:

The college graduates work in everything related to tourism and hospitality industry, governmental institutions and private organisations. In addition to the skills of tourism and hospitality the graduates have, they are also highly skilled in the area of communication, tourism linguistics and computer skills and accounting, administration, all of which entice many hotels and organisations to select to recruit the graduate students.

(TA-2M)

The two statements above from a human resource manager and a tourism academic illustrate that when the graduates are willing to work in the industry, or when they are qualified to work in the industry, the industry is not willing to recruit them for cost reasons.

This reveals another issue that will affect the sector in Oman the output of the institutions will exceed what the labour market can absorb. This overproduction may well be directly linked to the unwillingness of the employers to recruit college and university graduates. This issue has also been documented in other countries, it has been cited by Ryan (1995 cited in Hjalager, 2003:33), “at the end of the day, the sector is not that keen on recruiting specialised candidates, and there are voices warning of an ‘overproduction’”. It has been mentioned in section 3.15 that Omani government is giving a high consideration to tourism and hospitality education to prepare the students
with the required skills to enter the labour market. Yet, the preferences of employers to recruit school leaver and casual labour for cost reasons will create an issue of overproduction of specialised graduates without jobs.

In addition, the recruitment method is sometimes associated with who is recruiting who. In other words, if the human resource manager is not local, the potential of recruiting someone from a similar background would be higher and conversely the potential of recruiting Omanis will be much less, hence threat to the implementation of Omanisation. This consistent with the issue in section 2.7 that recruiting expatriates can limit opportunities for local as illustrate in some TV programmes like Darayesh 2 in Oman channel in 2008. This is also supported by Heher (2005) that in employing expatriates in Taiwan in different sectors increased unemployment among locals.

One hotel employee revealed this issue:

*We can see that the manager always like to bring employees from his country, his relatives and his friends to work instead of Omanis.*

(HE3-7M)

### 5.3.2 High Labour Turnover and Poor Staff Retention

Many hospitality employees are recruited into this sector as contingent work (Hjalager and Andersen, 2001), but not as a professional career, so they leave the work in the hospitality industry once they find a better job in the public sector or any other company with better pay. Thus, one of the most enduring problems of human resources in the hospitality sector is the labour turnover and poor staff retention. Commenting on this issue a female consultant from Ministry of Manpower said:
Some of them after getting trained and have started working with any company or hotel, they decide not to complete with that company or that hotel either because they do not like the job or sometime they find better job in the government sector or any other company for better pay or better offers.

(MPC3-F)

The statement above shows how employee turnover is connected to wage rates which produce earnings that are not competitive with other firms in the local labour market (Ongori, 2007). It has mentioned in section 2.8.1.5 that many graduates leave the industry for other careers, and one of the major reasons is the pay level (Pavesic and Brymer, 1989).

In the Sultanate, the remuneration in the hotel sector is one of the key reasons behind Omanis reluctance to work in hotels, especially amongst graduates as asserted by a hotel human resource manager saying:

*We recruit the employees, we train them for few months, until they become familiar and used to the job, but suddenly after four or six months, they inform us that they want to move to another company or another hotel or they found job in the government sector.*

(H4-2M)

Another hotel human resource manager confirmed the same issue that sometimes the employee will leave the hotel even if the pay difference is not very significant.

*Honestly saying that some of our employees would leave the hotel for an extra OMR10 (£15) monthly. But because for the employees this little amount would make a difference otherwise if doesn’t make any difference I do not think they would leave for this little amount.*

(H5-2M)
He further added about the impossibility of increasing the salary to the level of government salaries, or like other government hotels (buildings owned by the government), because of the private ownership of the hotel.

But unfortunately it is not possible to increase their salaries; our hotel is a private and cannot be compared to government hotels or salaries.

(H5-2M)

The turnover in the Sultanate is also connected with the employment contract. It has mentioned in section 3.10.1 that a formal written contract between the employee and the employer should be written, this contract preserves the employer and employee’s rights. However, some of the employers were complaining that the contract with Omani is not like the one with expatriates as the employers can keep the latter for a year or two without leaving the job. They also complain that since there is a notice of leave in the contract which is one month, so the employees can leave at anytime after they give a notice to the employers which is not enough to replace the employee. This issue was illustrated by a four star hotel human resource manager:

The hotel can not control the turnover or the retention of the employees and can not force the employees to stay if they are Omani, because there is no contract between us and him or her to keep him for one or two years like the expatriate, and there is no law can preserve our rights. The law of the ministry of manpower 35/2003 which agreed by his majesty Sultan Qaboos, says that if the employee wants to leave the job then he will have to give the employer a month notice before leaving the job which is not enough to get a new employee and train him.

(H4-2M)

The level of staff turnover in hospitality service organisations has been shown to be high across a range of large and small companies as reported by a research project commissioned by the British Institute of Innkeeping (Lashley, 2002). In the Sultanate,
hotel chains and well-known hotels have a high employee turnover as well, which is due to different reasons (e.g. low pay, reputation of the hospitality jobs, working hours).

The five-star non-Omani hotel sales marketing manager being interviewed before interviewing the hotel human resource manager stated that:

*In the 2005, twenty of our employees moved to another newly-opened organisation for better pay, which caused a shortage of labour in the hotel for few months, as it was not easy to replace a big number like this.*

(HE5-1M)

An Omani human resource manager from the same hotel disputed what was said above and denied that they have a high employee turnover, which possibly reflects the scenario where some managers try to massage the data and hide the reality from the public. He declared:

*We do not have high turnover in the last few years, as we always try to retain our employees by all means.*

(HS5-1M)

Turnover and poor retention of employees is also connected with the reputation and low status of hospitality jobs. According to Barron et al (2007) the image of tourism employment is of glamour, while on the other hand there is evidence of low pay and low status.

In the Omani hotel industry this is a common reason for Omanis not seeking long-term employment in the hospitality industry. Omanis choose the job in the hotel industry as a temporary job until they get a “real” job elsewhere, due to the low status of hospitality
work as perceived by Omani society. They consider this kind of job suitable for expatriate workers from countries like India, Bangladesh, and other East Asia countries but not for Omanis.

The confliction between the service role and the feeling the employees have about what their job or what they do is another reason of leaving the industry. Thus, it could be said that the identity of the worker is associated with the turnover. It has been noted in section 2.8.1.4 that work play important role in constructing individual’s identity. In the statement below where the male employee from five stars hotel feels embarrassed of what he is doing and want to leave the job, this confirm that identities of individuals in societies is determined by the work they do. In this case, since working in hotels considered being low status job in the Omani society, accordingly, employees feel that their identity as well will be considered low by the society as it is being judged by their job.

An employee illustrated this issue stating:

> Between me and you, I am working in this hotel as a temporary job, but once I get another job, I will leave the work here, I do not like to tell people that I work in hotel, I feel embarrassed of my job. You know that our society looks to our work as low work.

(H5-1M)

This issue was confirmed by some hotel employers being interviewed. One human resource manager stated that:

> Most Omani employees apply to work in the hotel till they get another job, as they feel that working in hotels is something to be ashamed of, and they do not like to tell people that they work in hotels.

(H5-2M)
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

According to Purcell and Quinn (1996), one of main reasons for leaving the industry is ‘overeducation’ since graduates tend to quickly exhaust the learning potential in typical managerial jobs in the tourism industry and want to go on to new challenges.

To solve the turnover problem, Omani hotels owners temporarily resort to hiring part-time or casual employees, especially during the high season, and when they do not have enough employees. Hotel owners often hire students who are a particularly popular resource for the industry. According to Hjalager and Andersen (2001), there are several reasons for this recruiting behaviour. Students are generally available for work in the evening, and at weekends and during holidays, which coincide quite well with busy periods in the tourism industry. In addition, students are generally quite good at foreign languages, and they are flexible.

One Omani hotel human resource manager answered the question about how they address the turnover problem:

It is not easy to replace the employees, especially during the high season, (i.e. if we get turnover among the service employees, during the high seasons if we have a wedding event or a conference) we recruit part-time or casual employees from different companies or another hotels, or contact the college of tourism to arrange with them to hire some student as a part time employees.

(H5-1M)

Employers resort to flexible work practices because it can result in saving on wages costs. For example, the work may be hired and paid for only if there is work to be done. Flexible workers also earn less than comparable tenured workers and not entitled to the benefits that tenured workers receive. Another benefit of using flexible worker is that it is easier for the organisation to hire the new workers and fire them under any adverse circumstances. Another issue related to hiring flexible workers is that hotel employer by
hiring flexible workers can save training cost as the flexible workers are less likely to be involved in any work-related training to improve their skills. Yet as it has been mentioned in section 2.8.1.1 that, according to Moyle (2008), employers compelled by an immediate need to fill vacancies in the high season with poor-skilled people, or people without formal training, and this use of casual labour to fill the vacancies could create a weak link between employers in the sector and training agencies. The use of casual labour also as discussed in section 2.8.1.1, that although this approach meet employer's financial needs, but it could also create an image that the industry is only interested in cost and nothing else (Brien, 2004).

He further added that it is very different when the turnover was not in high season:

\[\text{If any of our employees left the hotel during off peak season and if it will not affect the work progress in the hotel then we will follow any of recruitment method to replace the employee, even if it will take longer. But if we have a shortage, then we will replace him or her temporarily with any part time employee, until we find the right employee to be recruited.}\]

(H5-1M)

This also shows that flexible worker is an option to solve the problem of turnover or employees shortage in the hotel, which could be one of preferable methods of hiring workers in the hotel in terms of cost saving.

The turnover correlates with the internal and external labour market. In Oman when hotel employers resort to rely on external labour market to fill vacancies caused by labour turnover, this cause another issue of labour turnover and unstable employment. In section 2.6, Caroli (2007) asserts that when firms rely on the internal labour market, the labour turnover will be low, while in the case of relying on the external labour market, the labour turnover will be high. This could explain the increasing rate of the
turnover in the hotel sector in the Sultanate as the employers depend on the external labour market to fill the job vacancies, which results in labour turnover.

5.3.3 Lack of Job Continuity and Job Security

Concerns about continuity and job security were cited as two key reasons why Omanis prefer to work in the Government sector, rather than choosing careers in tourism and hospitality industry. “Public sector jobs are largely considered to be the most secure” (Clark and Postal-Vinay, 2005:3).

Most of the interviewees mentioned that young Omanis do not like to work in the hotel industry; they think that any job in the government sector is more secure than a job in the private sector. The recruitment laws in the government sector offer a better environment for its employees ‘to be retained in their jobs,’ with a guarantee that at the end of the month, they will get paid, and with no fear that the government establishment or the institution will be closed. In case such things were to happen, there would perception of greater security, and that the government would put them in another job in the same sector. Baum (1999:5) noted that:

one of the major justifications for public sector involvement in supporting the HRD needs of tourism businesses is particularly relevant in the context of developing tourism economies, because the tourism sector does not have the maturity, cohesiveness, expertise or level of international investment to meet its HRD needs unaided.

This issue is very common in Oman not only in the hotel sector, but in across all different sector. Many Omanis prefer to work in the government sector, because it is more secure. Most of hotels in the country are private ownership which makes working in the hotels less attractive to Omanis because of job security.
Confirming this thought, one tourism academic said:

\[ \text{It is about living secure, and they think they will be more secure to work in the government and even when they have to work in hotels they like to work in Al-Bustan hotel or Intercontinental hotel, the hotels which almost owned by the government.} \]

(TM1-A)

From the perspective of the tourism academics, employees do not like to work in hotels, as they do not feel secure about work in the private sector. This proves that in some cases it is not about working in the hotels, because in some cases where the hotels are owned by the government (only buildings owned by government), so the employees are not so reluctant to work in hotels, but if the hotel is owned by any private company, the case is different, and the employees hesitate to work because of job insecurity. So they get training, then they choose to work in a different areas, or in the government sector. This confirmed that the special attributes of the government sector such as; life long employment, wages, working conditions and working hours make it more attractive to employees than the private sector section 3.9.1.

Supporting this, a female consultant from Ministry of Manpower said:

\[ \text{We do face challenges with recruiting Omanis after they get trained in the different institutions. They get the training, but they do not prefer to work in hotels. But most of the ministries and the government sector still require us to recruit Omanis, so we send them to work in the hospitality service in the ministries as they prefer to work in long-term careers in the government sector.} \]

(MPC3-F)

In some cases, when the trainees were being paid by the Ministry of Manpower or any other government institutions, they have an obligation to work in the industry for a period of time equal to the training cost. In case the trainee refuses to work in the industry, it is a difficult task for the organisations to keep track of the candidates who change jobs after completing their training and many employees believe they are
deprived of income which they should have received (Wilkins, 2002). Supporting this issue a female consultant from the Ministry of Manpower said:

*If the trainee refused to work in the industry, he or she will have to pay all the operating expense or to work for a period of time equal to the training cost.*

(MPC3-F)

The majority of hotels face the same employee situation. The employees accepted the job in the hotel as a temporary job until they found another job, either for more salary or to move to the government sector. This proved that the training in the private sector is a bridge for the employees to enter the government sector or to other well known organisations. One of the hotel human resource managers stated:

*Some of them like to work in the hotels, and when they get good paid they continue in the hotels, otherwise they leave if they find a better paid somewhere else, or they find a job in the government sector.*

(H5-2M)

This support what is been discussed in section 2.8.1.6 that nowadays workers are different to workers in 1970s and 1980s where workers valued an interesting job more than anything else. Workers nowadays place the highest value on job security and good pay.

**From a tourism academic’s perspective**

*Graduates from different colleges in the country tend to be attracted to work in large and well-known organisations more than in small ones.*

(TA1-M)

This is also consistent with other studies; Hjalager (2003) shows that hospitality students in Denmark displayed high interest and were more attracted to the large organizations such as SAS/Radisson, followed by other well-known Scandinavian and international tourism enterprises.
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

5.3.4 Low Remuneration

In addition to the previous issues, the most effective and important factor that restrains graduate or young Omanis from working in the hotel industry is salary. It has been discussed in section 2.6 that wages are associated with the labour market and vary when it set internally or externally. According to Lazear and Oyer (2004) if an ILM exists, then there must be some jobs, presumably at high levels, that are filled almost exclusively through promotion from within and there must be other port-of-entry jobs, presumably at low levels, that are filled externally. The emphasis on “Omanizing” the lowest rank of jobs has increased the number of unemployment graduates who claim that these jobs cannot assure or provide good living standards. In response to this, the Omani government decided to determine OMR120 (about £172) as the minimum monthly wage at entry level for the private sector to be paid to Omani employees with a certain level of qualification (e.g. high school leavers).

This decision was followed by the determination of a sliding scale of minimum wages based on certain professions and holders of lower qualified posts. Even though this was used negatively by many private sector units, who did not offer more than the minimum monthly wage limit of £172 for high school graduates, as well as illiterate employees, many Omanis accepted it as a resolution. Moreover, the labour law declared a few years ago outlawed payment discrimination by gender, where all graduates are offered equal salaries based on the certificate and experience they have (Oman Labour Law, 2003).

Meanwhile some of the government hotels provide a salary of OMR300 (about £400) as a minimum monthly wage for the university graduate, which is still not equal to other government jobs such as teachers, engineers and demonstrators who earn between OMR
500-700 (about £630-840), which makes a big difference between the public and private sector. This issue was supported by different interviewees:

The problem is, any graduate wants to start at least with a salary as his graduate colleague earns who works as a teacher or in any government jobs, and finish his work at 2:30 pm, with two days weekend holiday.

(TA1-M)

Although the government restrictions with regard a minimum wages at entry level is being applied, but that only for the low jobs where applicant holds a low educational level and not for the university graduates. Thus, before a worker who have a high qualification signs on with the hotel, he or she may have many choices across firms where wages are set internally, and the ability to join a number of different firms would have implications at least for the excepted present value of lifetime wages that a firm would have to offer at the entry level.

The case in the Omani hotel industry is that employers according to Omanisation Plan implementation, they have to recruit Omanis in their hotels. Yet, the reality is very different. Employers recruit higher number of unqualified Omanis in low levels job to meet the Omanisation Plan requirements, rather than few numbers of graduates in high level jobs. This creates an unemployment culture amongst graduates as hotels prefer to recruit unqualified employees for cost minimisation. So it could be said the hotels in Oman employ large number of employee at low rates of pay instead of high number of employees at a higher cost of pay. This consistent with has been noted in section 2.8.1.7 under the remuneration section.

Another tourism consultant commented on the same issue by saying:

One of the important reasons deterring Omanis from working in the hotel industry, is that Omani youths complain that they do not get a good salary from the their jobs in the hotels, compared to the government
sector salaries paid to any employee who has the same qualifications. So they prefer to look for a job in the government sector, or at least in any hotels owned by the government.

(TC1-M)

Another hotel employer said something which conflicts with previous comments highlighting that their hotel pay is almost equal to what the government departments pay graduate students (e.g. teachers)

_The graduated student when they get the job in our hotel, started with a basic salary of OMR300 with allowances for the housing and transportation sometimes reach OMR200 and this is only as a beginning and this salary increase gradually during their work, but for the employees with lower qualifications we pay them less depending on their job. This means that the salaries are almost equal to the government sector salary._

(H5-1M)

Although what he said is right, this is because the hotel is a government hotel, and the salaries are paid by the government. So the pay for the graduate students is high compared to other hotels in the private sector. This shows that the salary for the university graduates is higher in hotels owned by the government as the wage is better at the entry level.

In section 2.6, Lazear and Oyer (2004) assert that employers cannot force workers to accept wages which are below market wages, and would result in turnover. In the Omani hotel industry, where wage competitiveness between firms appear, this is not the case as most of the hotels are in private ownership and employers cannot afford to pay high wages for their employees, unlike government-owned hotels. Therefore, employers in such hotels cannot compete with government hotels and pay as much as the government hotels pay their employers. This creates a high turnover rate, and increases the reliability on casual workers from the external labour market.
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

This was asserted by a private five star hotel employer:

\[ \textit{We can not pay our employees as much Al-Bustan hotel pays its employees. Al-Bustan is a government hotel, but our hotel is a private hotel.} \]

(H5-2M)

It could be argued that the minimum wage legislation by the government is important at entry level; however, it does not guarantee an increase in pay if the workers continue in their job. It could also be said that even an external control of wage is applied to citizens; the salary for expatriate in low level jobs could be less than Omani citizens. As a result this will encourage employers to recruit expatriates or rely on casual workers from external labour market for cost minimisation.

This is emphasised as Lazear and Oyer (2004) who found that if the worker is hired only into the lowest level job in the firm and stayed in the firm his or her entire life, and even if all higher positions in the firm were filled through promotion from below, it is still possible that an ELM for labour could exist at all firms. Hjalager (2003:30) asserted that \textit{in most sectors of the economy, large employers offer better wages and more favorable working conditions.}

Since some jobs can be done by foreigners who are more satisfied with lower payments than their Omani equivalents, some of the employers prefer to recruit foreigners rather than Omanis. According to Eur (2003), at the end of 1996, almost 80% of all employees in the public sector, but only 25% of private sector employees were Omanis. It will be difficult for the government to increase this percentage, as the monthly salary of the majority of foreign workers in the private sector is much less than an Omani would expect to earn.
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

5.3.5 Poor Working Conditions

Working hours are considered another area of discrepancy between the private sector and government jobs. The hospitality industry involves sometimes working anti-social hours and, in particular, special public holiday times are considered an issue because employees are not able to get time off to spend with their families on time, because of the nature of their work. Although they know that there are some government sectors facing the same restrictions, such as the royal police or the armed forces, or physicians in the hospitals, they still complain about this issue:

*Although they get high salary in some hotels, but they still complain of long working hours, and the night shifts. They also complain that they work late at night. Another complains is that the government sector get longer holidays in some occasions like Eids and notional holidays. They also can not take their holidays whenever they want because of the business seasons.*

(H5-2M)

A tourism academic further added that most graduates prefer to work in the government sector jobs, as they think that working conditions in the government sectors are more suitable than the private sector, since the first offers better pay, and limited working hours from 7:30 am- 2:30 pm with a two-day weekend holiday:

*The problem is that any graduate wants to start at least with a salary similar to his/her graduate colleague earns who works as a teacher or in any government jobs, and finish his work at 2:30 pm, with two days weekend holiday.*

(TA1-M)

Some employees also complained about standing for long times, especially in hotel receptions, which affects their health. Consistent with stressors associated with the job itself and work demands, shift work (essentially defined as work during non-standard
hours) and the number of hours worked have a significant effect on the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of employees (Cleveland et al, 2007).

A hotel employee referred to this issue by stating that:

*Working in the reception require standing for long hours during my shift, this makes me feel tired and very exhausted by the end of the day. Although sometime we put chairs to set on if we do not have any guests, but it is difficult to take rest during the high season.*

(HE4-2M)

It has been mentioned in section 2.8.1.7 that the stress in the work environment of the employees, may lead to turnover. This issue is also common in the hotel sector in the Sultanate. Some employees declared that:

*One of major reasons behind the turnover is the high work stress.*

(HE5-10F)

The same issue is asserted and supported by a government official:

*We always get complaints from hospitality industry employees that the work stress is high and the pay is low, and they want to leave the industry, and find another job else where.*

(TC2-M)

5.4 Education and Training Issues

5.4.1 Qualifications and Training

Quality is key to destination competitiveness and training is key to quality standards. Without skilled and well-managed staff, commitment to service quality will remain merely aspiration (Haven and Jones, 2006:15). In other words, in today’s world, people and how they are managed have become an integral source of competitive success (Nolan, 2002).
In the Sultanate of Oman, there are number of established training and education institutions capable of providing the necessary hospitality and tourism training and education (see section 3.6). However, with regard to hospitality education efforts in Oman and the training of the employees in the industry, various issues emerged.

One of the most important issues faced by the employers in the hospitality industry is the lack of qualified Omani employees available to work in the hotels. This issue was discussed by all of the interviewees the researcher interviewed, and was identified as one of the major reasons behind recruiting expatriates to fill the vacancies for some occupation levels.

Graduates from colleges and universities refuse to work in hotels for low salaries. Together with the poor reputation of the hotel careers, the result is that the hotels recruit low qualified employees, and provide them with in-house training to fill their job vacancies. Purcell and Quinn (1996) asserted that many higher education students pursuing qualifications within tourism and hospitality do not obtain employment in these sectors.

A male tourism academic said:

*The graduates with high qualifications from Sultan Qaboos University, for example, refuse to work in a hotel, and they may accept a job in one of the tourism sectors, such as working at the airlines, tour operators and travel agencies, but not in hotels, unless it is a high position job.*

(TA1-M)

Another issue also raised by hotel human resource managers is the lack of skill among the Omani employees in the hotel. The issue being pointed out here is very important.
He mentioned that some of the employees in the hotel are graduates from NHI (section 3.15.3) which qualifies the students with the important skills needed to start work with. The manager stated that:

Most of the new graduates when they start the work in the hotel, they know nothing about the real work, as they only have the knowledge but they do not know anything in the practical part. They are supposed to know at least a few little things about the work, but they look like they know nothing. It might be the difference between what they learned in the institution and the real work in the hotel.

(H5-3M)

The statement above illustrates a conflict between what the institutions are supposed to provide and what the real experience shows. In section 3.15, it has been mentioned that there are three different institutions provide courses on tourism and hospitality studies. However, this statement illustrates that there is a lack of communication between what these institutions provide and what industry require. It has also been mentioned in the section 3.15 and (see appendix 2, 3, 4) as well as by tourism academics interviewed that students get their training in or out the country. In the country, the training takes place in some of these hotels which complain about institutions outcomes. So it could be said that this issue is a result of the difference between what they study in the institution, and what the real experience requires, and a result of lack of communications between institutions and industry.

Two of the three five star hotels in Muscat interviewed revealed that they provide their employees with in and off-house training. They also send their employees to different institutions in the country and abroad to get training in different areas to improve their skills.
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

If we feel that any of our employees need certain training in certain areas, we either provide them with in-house training if we do offer it in our courses in the hotel in our HRD department, or we send them to any short courses in any institutions in or out the country.

(H5-1M) and (H5-3M)

According to Al-Hamadi (2007), some organisations do not have sufficient funds to support HRD programmes and also managers and direct supervisors resist organisational change efforts due to the cost of development programs. Human resource managers of four and three star hotels revealed that they have issues related to the cost of training and development of their employees. According to the finding of this research, these hotels do not have enough financial sources to provide their employees with required training. They also added that they do sometimes provide training to their front line employees to improve their skills as they are in direct contact with customers.

We can not provide all of our employees with the training required, as the income is not as in the big hotels, and the room rates are not very high compared to five star hotels. So we can not spend too much on the training.

(H4-2M) and (H3-3M)

The three star hotels only offer their employees training when they first attend the job, as an orientation programme until they become competent in the job before they start to face any customers. This is what a human resource manager stated about this:

When the employee first start the work, we the hotel have a strong commitment to this new employees, and we demonstrate this by a vigorous new hire orientation program that set our expectations squarely in front of these employees before they ever saw a customer.

(H3-1M)
Interviewing employees from the same hotel showed that although the hotel is concerned about the orientation programme for new employees before they meet any customers, they are less concerned about any further training or development of the employees. This issue revealed by an employee from one of the three stars hotels:

*The hotel does not provide us with any further training or development, so we are not able to ask for any promotion or increment in our salaries.*

(HE3-7M)

Another female employee from a different hotel confirmed the previous statement that the hotel does not provide them with any training to improve their performance.

*We do not get any training in the hotel, only when we start the job to adapt the work and familiarize ourselves with it. But after that we do not get any further training. So we do not get any increment or rewards.*

(HE3-4F)

### 5.4.2 Cost of Training

Despite the fact that the training leads to improved business performance, some hotel managers still treat investment in people in the same way as they treat investment in physical facilities and capital plant (Lashley, 2002). But for the training of human resources the situation is different. The measure of training benefits has to start with a consideration of whether the behavioural change may or may not have occurred. So both employee performance and satisfaction, together with service quality and customer satisfaction, have to be included in measures of the benefits of training (Lashley, 2002). The issue raised by the employees and the employers is the reward expected from the investment in human resources is the motivation for pursuing education and training (Becker, 1975).
In the Sultanate of Oman, while the employees are willing to pursue further education and get extra training to gain promotion and salary increments, the employers do not want to provide the employees with training for the same reason. The training will cost the organisation twice, once when they provide the employee with the training either on- or off the job training. And second when the employee asks for a reward for the training undertaken. In this case if the trained employee is paid as much as the untrained employee, this will result in the employee preferring not to pursue any further training or education because of the lack of rewards.

Omani employees revealed that the training which is provided is more operational in nature and that supervisory and managerial training is rarely given to Omanis. One hotel employee asserted that:

The only training programs they provide us with are the operational ones, but they do not provide us with any management programs, as all the managerial positions are occupied by expatriates.

(HE5-4M)

Another human resource manager complained about the high turnover in their hotels and directly associated the training and development of their employees with this turnover. In other words, employees seek to secure higher/better salary or better work environment elsewhere after they get further training and career development. This has been discussed in section 2.8.2.1 and noted that employers think that developing employee is an expensive investment. It could also encourage the employees to leave the organisation after the training; therefore, employers think that it does not make
sense to develop the employee if they are going to leave the organisation. For example, one human resource manager stated:

*The employees ask for the training for their own sake either for better and higher salary or to find better job elsewhere.*

(H5-1M)

Previous studies (Zhang and Wu, 2004), show that well-trained hotel managers or supervisors with good English language and management skills are very much welcomed by banks and other organisations. This is the reason that those who are running or managing the hotels are unwilling to invest in developing their employees.

Another issue with regards to training was raised by many Omani employees from the sampled hotels. When training was provided by expatriates it was not always the case that the expatriate would teach the local all of the skills required, as the latter might one day take the expatriate’s place. In effect, local employees were considered to be a threat to expatriate jobs. One five star hotel employee said:

*The expatriate senior workers in the hotel are not always willing to teach us everything, as they think that we might take their places one day.*

(HE5-4M)

Therefore this issue could be one of the obstacles deter Omanis from working in hotels, as they receive little career development and advancement, and therefore they always lack the requisite skills to secure promotion. This has implications for the employees in terms of their skills development, as well as for the hotel sector in terms of skills shortages and skills gaps which affect service quality and delivery across the sector in Oman.
5.4.3 Skills Gaps and Skills Shortage

The researcher observed from the field work that most of managerial and supervisory positions are occupied by foreigners. 100% of General Managers of five and four star hotels in this research are not Omanis. 90% of General Managers of three star hotels are foreigners. Human resource managers in all hotels commented on this by saying that:

None of the Omanis have the skills required for those positions.

(H5-1M)

This scenario confirms the lack of career progression and career advancement available for Omani employees. As a result of this, there will be no role model to inspire Omanis to work in hotels as long as the managerial positions are occupied by expatriates.

Another human resource manager stated:

The general manager in the hotel is not Omani, and this is because none of Omanis can manage a large chain hotel like this.

(H5-3M)

Employers also reported hard-to-fill vacancies amongst some jobs such as IT supports in the hotel, and technicians which also required a high level of skills, skills which locals were not felt to offer:

The hotel is working in a very high technical system which requires a very high level of skills, and none of applicants till now can fill this job. So we always recruit expatriates to fill the vacancies in these jobs.

(H5-2M)

Similarly, hard-to-fill vacancies also featured in positions other than the managerial and supervisory positions, such as restaurants and kitchens where professional waiters and trained chefs are needed.

Well, there are some jobs like chefs I think will not be able to be filled with Omanis for the next ten years.

(H5-2M)
Consequently, the hotel sector is forced to rely on expatriates to fill the vacancies. The issue of skill gaps is a worldwide problem. In India, for instance, the shortage of skilled manpower poses a major threat to the overall development of tourism (Subbarao, 2008). In Dubai, a shortage of manpower poses the biggest challenge to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) tourism industry, according to industry management studies (Sinclair, 2008). Brein (2004) also indicated that chef’s positions were hardest to fill in the hotel sector in New Zealand.

The skills gap in Oman seems to be of a slightly different nature in that the industry is undergoing difficulties in recruiting the workforce not because of a lack of education but due to competition from other economic sectors, the lack of adequate management of human resources, and unattractive working condition in the tourism and its sub-sectors. This consistent with what Baum (2002) argued (see section 2.5) that in developed countries there is no shortage of labour but the skills base that exists in the economy may not be tuned to effective tourism work. So even in the developing countries the situation is of no difference. Notwithstanding that in the Sultanate, there are three different institutions which train and educate human resources to enter the labour market. However, from this field work, results showed that the outputs of these institutions do not enter the hotel industry, but they choose different career path which therefore create skills shortages amongst the hotel employees.

A survey by Hospitality Training Foundation (HTF) (2003 cited in James, 2005:286) indicated that “tourism has failed to attract skilled staff, and has failed to develop skills in existing employees”. Reflecting on these issues, the interviews revealed that the majority of hotel employees in the hotels had either graduated from a vocational
institution or from high schools or lower, reinforcing that hotel industry provides unattractive employment opportunities for college and university graduates because of its low wages and long working hours. This is also shows that the situation in the developed countries is as similar as in the developing countries when Baum (2002) emphasises section 2.8.2.1 that skill shortages in developed countries exist as result of the image problems that the sector has.

5.4.4 Lack of Foreign Language Skills
The strength of the need to know a foreign language depends on the employee's level within the organisation and the reason for using the language (Kluge, 1984). In section 2.8.2.1 the tourism industry with its sub-sectors including hotels in many countries such as Caribbean and China is working to develop the language skills of its employees. For example in China according to Hinds et al (2004) the language skills of employees still does not meet the expectations of international travellers.

In Oman this issue is correlated with employing expatriates to resort the lack of foreign language. One of the most common reasons behind recruiting expatriates in the hotel industry in the Sultanate is the lack of foreign languages and lack of high management qualifications amongst Omani employees. One human resource manager confirmed this issue:

*We recruit expatriate employees from countries like India and the Philippines, as they speak more English than Omanis, and mostly they are in service jobs.*

(H5-3M)
Kluge (1984) emphasised the importance of foreign languages for English-speaking countries. There are three major needs for study of a foreign language in the hospitality industry: (1) the need to communicate with non-English speaking employees, (2) the need to assist foreign travelers; and (3) the need to work in a non-English speaking country. Haven et al. (2004) describe foreign language skills as ‘extremely important’ for the employer when they recruit their employees.

According to the human resource managers interviewed, there was general agreement amongst them, that there is a significant gap in the foreign language skills of Omanis. Although some Omanis speak English, Urdu, Baluchi, and Swahili (section 3.2.3), there is a need for languages other than those languages to meet the international travelers needs. Most of employees in the receptions are able to speak English but English is not the only language important for the employees as there are some delegations from other countries, like Japan, China, Italy, and France. Some tourists do not speak English; therefore the need to hire expatriates is important to resolve this problem.

One human resource manager stated:

The majority of our employees, especially in reception, housekeeping and food and beverage, speak English and other languages, such as Urdu and Swahili, but this is not enough, as we have some tourists who do not speak English. Therefore we either hire expatriates or we send our employee to learn foreign languages.

(H5-1M)
5.5 Cultural and Social Issues

5.5.1 Religious Issues

It has been revealed from the field work of this research, and pointed out by all interviewees that even if the hotel industry will have a better environment in terms of pay, working condition, job security, and career progression, Omanis will still be deterred from working in the hotel industry because of different cultural and social issues as it will be discussed in this section. Along with the multicultural workforce, the industry is also facing religious and social conflicts regarding the refusal of many graduates to work in jobs which are categorised as Islamically-unacceptable sources of income. According to Din (1989:554) “tourism has been blamed for sexual permissiveness, flagrant indulgence in alcohol, gambling, drugs, pornography, voyeurism, and so on”.

These rejections can hardly be changed by legislative enforcement because it clashes with the most dynamic factor in Muslims lives - Islam. Commenting on that issue a male tourism consultant said:

As Omanis, with our culture and our religion, this kind of job is still not acceptable from our society.

(TC1-M)

It has been discussed in section 2.9 that in traditional societies’, religion plays a major role in shaping people’s behaviours. Islam as religion has its influence on individuals’ attitudes and beliefs of different aspects on their lives. In Oman, Islam is heavily influences people’s life and shapes their behaviors as noted in section 3.2.4. Therefore, some employees deter to take the hospitality job as a life career but only as a temporary job because of the Islamic codes. This also emphasises section 2.8.1.4 that identities within societies have been determined by the work that people do, and that if the worker
is strongly identify with their roles, they are apt to feel truly themselves. In this case, where employees work in a job that conflict with their beliefs, they feel dissonance and unauthentic.

a) Unlawful Food and Beverages

Guerrier and Adib (2000) state that hospitality workers in some cases are required to face certain aspects of life which are often forbidden. According to Guerrier and Adib (2000) being away from home for some customers allows them to engage in activities which would be not acceptable at home. They also assert that service provided in the hospitality organisations are challenged in terms of the confliction between providing guest with required service and policing their behaviours. For example the type of food customers allowed to consume, or the consumption of alcohol and drugs and their sexual behaviour. Hearn and Parkin (1987 cited in Guerrier and Adib, 2000:261) point out “hotel and guest house managements explicitly or implicitly have to be aware of the sexual possibilities for residents, to impose visiting or time restrictions, turn a blind eye, make arrangement for blue movies, call girls, or whatever”. Such activities according to hotel employees in the Sultanate are one of the reasons deterring Omanis from working in hotels. The employees feel that they are doing or involved in activities according to religion and society roles are prohibited, and they are in one way or another are responsible that they can not ban these activities.

The issue being raised by different employees is their concern about alcohol and other activities being carried out in the hotel which are also considered to be unlawful, such as the serving of pork and alcohol in hotel menus, and the gambling facilities provided by some hotels (Al-Mubarak, 2008). According to Sunnah hadith, working directly in the
distribution of alcoholic liquor and other associated unlawful businesses is unlawful work. According to Anas Ibn Malik Narrated that Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be upon Him) said:

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him) cursed ten people in connection with wine: the wine-presser, the one who has it pressed, the one who drinks it, the one who conveys it, the one to whom it is conveyed, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who benefits from the price paid for it, the one who buys it, and the one for whom it is bought.

Therefore, some employees consider that working in food and beverages areas is unlawful because of serving pork and alcohol. This issue was raised by the employees in all hotels. There was no difference between the private and public hotels (the building is only owned by the government but privately operated) in the service provided in the Sultanate was evident. Therefore, all of the hotels face the issue of serving unlawful food and beverages. Hence, it is not possible to address the issue of unlawful activities. This issue was supported by some hotel employees:

It is unlawful in our religion to serve alcohol in the restaurant, therefore I do not like to work in food and beverage areas, but as a temporary job, I am working in reception.

(HE5-3M)

The confliction between the professional self and personal self in hospitality work can demonstrate a tension to the worker and his or her identity. When the relationship with the guest is good, it makes the job enjoyable (Guerrier and Adib, 2000), however in the cases above where workers were asked to provide a service that considered to be unlawful, such as serving alcohol or pork, or involved in another activities such as gambling or sexual activities, this could result that the worker can not enjoy his or her job, and feel stressful. This stress is a result of the conflict between personal self in his or her real life as a person who obeys his/her religion and does not practice any of these
unlawful activities, and the professional self who has to provide or get involved in these services.

The issue of working in food and beverages is even more complicated for Omani employees during the Friday Prayers and holy month of Ramadhan for males and females alike. Objections are raised in the light of Islamic standards of propriety, such as catering during hours of Friday prayers and during Ramadhan, in addition to the issue of pork, alcohol and un-koshered (halal) meat.

*It is difficult for us as Muslim employees to serve people during Ramadhan or deliver food to the guests in their room during the daytime in Ramadhan.*

(HE5-3M)

b) Unlawful Activities

It has been noted above that being away from home for some customers allow them to practice activities which might be forbidden at home. This issue is being raised by some employees implying that some guests use the hotels to practice forbidden activities such as drinking or gambling or even adultery activities. This could be applied to both Omanis and international guests. Some Omani guests avoid drinking in public or at their homes and preferring to use hotel for these purposes because such activities are acceptable neither by religion nor by society. Therefore, they resort to hidden ways to practice these forbidden activities.

A male hotel employee in a three star hotel comments on this by saying that:

*There are some hidden things which happen in the hotels, we know about them but we do not dare to talk, but we know that they are immoral activities and illegal stuff and from the religious perspective they are not acceptable.*

(HE3-1M)
Whilst this statement hints at the activities involved, closer questioning revealed that the participant was referring to the practice of some hotels to rent rooms for unmarried couples, an act which is unacceptable according to the Islamic religious and moral code. Some hotels ask for the proof of travel to be produced at the time of check-in, and a marriage certificate for couples before check in, and for security and morality reasons some hotels strictly prohibit guest's visitors beyond the lobby area.

c) Source of Income

Another issue raised by some employees highlighted how the income coming from working in hotels is unlawful. So to make sure that the income is lawful according to the Islamic religion, the person may, of his own accord, opt to eschew any work that is in the least bit questionable, to make certain that all of his income is lawful and that nothing is tainted with any unlawful enterprise (Al Mubarak, 2008). Referring to this issue, a hotel employee stated that:

*We all know that working in hotel, as we serve alcohol and one of sources of hotel income is from selling alcohol.*

(HE5-4M)

All of these intentions for avoiding questionable work are certainly acceptable by Islamic societies. It is certainly an act of piety to religion to refrain from lawful work when some questionable practices are involved in it. However, some people think that if the person does not work directly in the area of doing unlawful activities, then he/she should not be concerned about the source of the income of the organisation. In other words, if the hotel provides alcohol or other unlawful food in their menus, if the employee is not working directly in the area of producing or serving this kind of food,
then the income of the individual is lawful regardless of the original income source of the organisation.

d) Mixing Between Males and Females

Another female employee mentioned the harassment she faced as a waitress in the hotel restaurant, and that some of the guests were trying to harass her and thought that she was obliged to provide them with a service not provided by the hotel. This female employee could not be rude with the customers, otherwise they would complain to the manager and instead she asked the manager to transfer her to another department.

> Every evening when I serve the guests, and when some of them got drunk and started harassing me, I ignored them and asked the manager to move me to another department, because I do not want to be in trouble or reply to them in a rude way, as they might complain to the manager and report that I was rude which might affect my job.

(HE3-3F)

This is entirely consistent with Hochschild (2003) who asserts that portraying emotions that are not really felt causes emotional dissonance. This dissonance of emotions happens when the worker displays the emotions required which might be different to the felt emotions (see section 2.8.1.3). This female employee had to express another feeling rather than the feeling she actually felt. She suppressed anger and resentment and induces an appropriate feeling that enables her to accept the difficult customer behaviour.

Asking the manager to move to another department confirms what Rutter and Feilding (1991 cited in Ashforth and Humphry, 1993) asserted, that the perceived need to suppress emotions in the workplace positively associated with overall stress and negatively associated with job satisfaction. The customer behaviour with the female
employee, and suppression of her real feelings made her more stressed and less satisfied with her job.

The issue of mixing men and women in the workplace from an Islamic perspective expresses that such interchange between men and women are not allowed. From the Islamic perspective, woman’s employment in general as noted in section 2.9.2 or in hotels in particular is not forbidden, as long it is within in the Islamic and cultural morals. According to Muslim scholar Al Obaikan (2008) cited in Al-Hakeem (2008:1).

_We cannot see any religious scriptures that forbid women from being engaged in duty together with men at work places. Islam permits women to mix with men even while performing Tawaf and Sa’ai. Similar is the case with shopping at market._

However Islam bans such mixing if it involves any seduction (Al-Hakeem, 2008). The interaction of both the guest and the customer can be a satisfying experience, when the expectations are in line with each other, but the service provider is extremely vulnerable if guests choose to step over the boundaries (Guerrier and Adib, 2001).

Another female employee also stated that:

_I work in the hotel in the restaurant, but my family thinks that I work in the administration office, as a coordinator, or a secretary, or this kind of job, but they do not know that I work in the restaurant, otherwise they will not allow me to work in the hotel, because they are concerned about my reputation and they think if the society knows that I work in such job, they think that I will not be able to get married and my reputation will be bad._

(HE3-11F)

Although mixing men and women can be seen in many sectors in the country such as colleges, universities, hospitals and other sectors, hotels do not have a good reputation
like other sectors. The statement above reflects that the reputation of the hospitality job amongst Omani society is not as good as the reputation of jobs in other sectors. It also illustrates that families in Oman have to some extent, an influence on their children’s career choice. In section 2.8.3.2, it has been asserted by Siann et al. (1995) that the majority of Muslim girls are obstructed in their career choice by their parent restrictions. This is also the case in the Omani society as a Muslim society, their people affected by their religion, and young people have to obey their parent in most aspects of life. Other cultural and religious factors affecting employment are to do with the nature of the industry itself. In some regions in Oman, females still go out with their faces covered, so it is hard for them to study tourism or work in the hotels and stay late at night at work. One of the interviewees supported this issue by saying:

*I was talking to a student who got the acceptance from the department of tourism and she wants to transfer to another department, the student replied to me: if we still go out with our faces covered (wearing neqab) in our region, how can we study tourism or work in hotels?*

(TA1-M)

This indicates the conflict between culture/religious conventions and perceptions of what the industry accepts. Ibrahim (2007) discussed this issue in the travel business in Egypt, and noted that tourism employers in Egypt are more willing to employ veiled women in their organisations than previously. However, it was also noted that when veiled women are employed, only those who wear the hejab are accepted, while those who wear the khimar or neqab are totally rejected.
e) Female Outfit

Another cultural issue raised by the human resource manager was about the clothes and the importance placed on the appearance (Shamir, 1980; Gilbert et al, 1998) of female waiters and girls in reception (see section 2.9.2) and that the service worker may have to rely on referent power to be socially attractive and friendly with the customer (Gilbert et al, 1998).

Although the female workers in the hotel wear the hotel uniform, but the way they dress and the hejab they wear needs to look nice to give a good impression to the customer.

(H5-1M)

Gilbert et al, (1998:50) addressed this issue in their research of sexual harassment issues in the hospitality industry, where girls working in the industry would be asked at work “to wear her skirt as she would feel it comfortable”. Service worker’s appearance according to Shamir (1980) might cause conflict between the requirements of subordinate service roles (SSRs) and personal attitudes and feelings of the role occupant.

It has been mentioned in section 2.9 that religion has a very obvious effect in people’s life, and it has a certain degree of influence on the culture characteristics of their people and institutions. It has also been mentioned that in some countries women have to follow a strict Islamic dress codes at work and elsewhere. The situation is not different in Oman where according to Islam women have to wear clothes which do not contradict Islamic codes. However, according to what also is being said in section 2.9 that even Islamic countries have a great deal in common, they also have differences. This can be found in Oman where some people very strictly adhered to Shari’a, whereas some of them have a complete freedom to wear what they want without any interfering from the government.
Therefore, in Oman most of the girls cover their heads with the hejab according to Islam and the cultural values placed on the hejab. Even in hotels where females work as waitresses or in the food and beverages area, most of them wear the hejab. However, the hejab has to be worn in a very modern way to give a good impression to the customer as in this case, when the hotel employer avoided recruiting any female who wore her hejab in a very restrictive way.

One hotel human resource manager declared in regard to this issue:

*We can not recruit a girl who will be wearing the hejab in a very restrictive way or totally black, which might give the impression to the customer as if she is terrorist.*

\[(H5-1M)\]

In some cases, the customer could complain to the hotel that they hesitate to ask the female waitress to serve him a glass of wine if she is wearing her hejab in a very restrictive way. This is how a hotel human resource manager comments on the female hejab in the hotel and the customer complaint about that:

*The way the female waitress wear their black scarf make the guest afraid to ask her any service like he wont ask her to bring a class of wine for him, because he doesn’t want to offence the culture or the religion, so he will have to find a guy or expatriate female to serve him.*

\[(H5-1M)\]

### 5.5.2 Family and Social Attitudes towards Hospitality Careers

Many of the socio-cultural attitudes towards employment in the hospitality sector are unfavourable as they affect the growth of qualified employment in the hospitality industry in the Sultanate. One of these factors is family and social attitudes towards hospitality careers in terms of their influence on the individual’s choice of their life
career, as well as the influence of the society and family on shaping individual’s education and career choice.

Some of the families are conservative to the extent that they object to their children working in hotels due to the conflict between the hotel activities and religious practices and Islamic doctrines. According to Al-Hamadi et al, (2007) the tribe and the family are the second top authorities after Islam on shaping and formulating the individual life (see section 3.2.4). Commenting on this issue, a male tourism consultant said:

Some of the families refuse to let their kids work in hotels, because the hotels still do not have a good reputation yet, and most people have the idea that the hotels is only a place for drinking and serving alcohol and doing forbidden things that they cannot do in other places.

(TC1-M)

It is also important to note that regardless the religion and people in the Omani society are very attached to their families as mentioned in section 3.2.4, and in section 2.8.3.2, that individuals are attached to their families and influenced by their families in their career choice. It has also been noted that most of young people make their career choice by consulting their families, and they give some thought to the impacts or the consequences of their choice of career on their families.

a) Region of Origin

Interestingly, region of origin is significant in the willingness to view hospitality careers favourably. Some of the graduates are willing to work in hotels, but this is because they are from the capital area (Muscat), which is more open-minded than other regions in the country. If graduates are from the interior or any other areas far from the capital, they
are less likely to consider work in the hospitality industry because their family will refuse it. One tourism academic referred to this issue saying:

*The students’ ambition to work in hotel, may be because they are from the capital region, because if they are from another region not the capital, their families will not allow them to work in hotels, and their society will not accept it as well.*

(TA1-M)

b) Family Influence on Career Choice

In the Sultanate, the parental influence on children’s career choice is varied. It is been mentioned in section 2.8.3.2 that career choice associated with different features of the family context such as socioeconomic status (SES) (Croft, 1997; Machatton, 1997; Sciarini, 1997; Cothran and Combrink 1999; Whiston and Keller, 2004). For example not all families in the capital accept that their children will join hospitality and on the contrary not all of them refuse. Scholars, e.g. Schulenberg et al, (1984) and Whiston and Keller (2004), disputed the SES which usually incorporates one or more of the following: paternal and maternal educational attainment, family income, paternal (and sometime maternal) and occupational status of the families influenced the career choice.

Although the literature says that those with high and middle SES background were more inclined to attend four-year colleges, while those with low SES background were inclined to attend community or technical colleges, in the Sultanate this is not always the case. Some families even with their low SES, they want their children to go four-year colleges and not community or technical colleges. This has been confirmed by the one tourism academic who said that:

*A female enrolled her daughter in the college of tourism after her high school and we have told her that she will have to work in the sector after*
she graduates. But suddenly one day she came wanted to withdraw her daughter’s application from the college because, when she informed her father that she will work in hotels, he refused and asked her mother to withdraw her application from the college and try to find her another college or if she can not get any admission in any college, she will stay home.

(TA2-M)

The statement above also reflects that woman in oriental and Islamic societies are under the control of their male guardians. Ibrahim et al (2007) identified three groups of interrelated overlapping personal, organisational and societal factors. Ibrahim et al (2007) also mentioned that parents’ attitude towards unmarried daughters is one of the family-related factors influencing women’s employment in the Egyptian travel industry.

Abou Zeid (2000 cited in Ibrahim, 2007) mentioned that in conventional social practice Muslim women are under the control and guidance of male guardians.

Another hotel human resource manager supported this issue mentioning that his father refused to talk to him for few years when he resigned from his job to work in a hotel:

I worked as a diplomat for few years but I like working in hotels, so I resigned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and worked at hotels, my father got angry with me and refused to talk to me for few years, because of the way people look at hospitality careers.

(H5-2M)

Confirming the statement above, one hotel’s human resource manager said that:

Some males or females applied to work in the hotel, after a period of time before we reply to them either with acceptance or refusing, they come to withdraw their application saying that their families refused to let them work in hotels.

(H5-3M)

It is not only the parents that have a direct influence on the career choice of young Omanis, but other relatives and friends influence them as well. So even though the high
school graduate or university graduate wants to work in a hotel, the choice is not always theirs. A human resource manager stated that:

*It is not only their family, but when their families talked to their neighbours or their friends; they told them that how can they let their kids work in such place, what people will say about them. So they tell their kids to go back to where they apply for the job to withdraw and cancel their application.*

(H5-2M)

c) Family Obligations

For women, the situation is even more complicated. Whilst in the first instance, women may opt for employment in the hospitality industry; this is not perceived to be a long-term career choice. Family obligation is one of the constraints of the choice of a hospitality career for females in Oman.

*I do not mind to work in the hotel now because I am not married, but if I am married, I am not going to work here, and when I get married I will try to find another job, or I will just stay at home.*

(HE4-12F)

The long working hours, the shifts, and working during holiday were the reasons raised by the female employees in the sampled hotels as a constraint in going on in the job if they have a family, as all of the reasons will conflict with family obligations. According to Cleveland *et al* (2007), despite the paucity of research about the work-family conflicts, many characteristics of jobs in the hospitality industry have long been associated with work-family conflict and stress concerns in other literatures (e.g. long hours scheduled at non-standard times, on-call hours, emphasis on face time and geographic mobility as a prerequisite for career advancement). Family obligations may be legitimate reasons for females to feel less freedom of movement in their careers (Hjalager, 2003).
A female employee asserted that:

\[ \text{It will be very difficult for me to work in the hotel if I have family and children with all other commitment associated with marriage and family life} \]

(HE5-11F)

On the contrary, females in three star hotels asserted that their manager showed an understanding of their family obligations and social commitments. The work–family culture that prevails within an organisation is an important factor in employee perceptions of work–family conflict and balance (Cleveland et al, 2007).

A female employee stated:

\[ \text{My manager is very understating to our culture and to my family obligation, so he does not let me work till night, and I always leave early from work.} \]

(HE3-6F)

Although there is a strong relationship between attitude and behaviour, however the attitude that an individual expresses may not necessarily enable a prediction about how they will act (Haven, 2002). The finding in this research expresses this issue as some employees revealed that working in the hotel is not the job they want, and therefore it is not the job which can bring them self-esteem or complacency. Notwithstanding that some hotel employees accept to work in hotels as long as they don not deal with customer or in what they consider a glamorous part of hotel jobs. However, some employees accept the job as they have no another alternative options. Gurrier and Adib (2000) assert that there is an image of hospitality workers as the dregs of society where the workers have to do dirty working, tedious and hard jobs for little pay because they
have no alternative or another options. Some hotel employees mentioned this view asserting:

*I do not like working in hotels, but I have no another option, but I do not feel comfortable, doing something against my beliefs.*

(HE3-1M)

Another hotel employee said:

*Sometime I feel bad of doing things that I do not like, or things that I do not really believe in, and this made me blame myself always, but I can not find another job, so I have to work here because I need the money.*

(HE4-11M)

d) Marriage Opportunity

The working conditions of the working in the hotel industry are associated with more limited marriage opportunities for male and female hotel managers, according to Guerrier (1986), the long and anti-social hours male managers spent at work, make it difficult to meet people outside the industry, so they prefer to marry someone they have already met at college or at the hotel. This issue is also obvious in the Sultanate but with females rather than males even if they are not in the managerial positions, they think the time they spent at the hotel will lessen their marriage chances as men like their women to spend most of her time with her family, and her children. Beside they also think since they do not have time to attend all the different occasions with their friends and relatives this will also affect their chances of getting married, as some arranged marriages happen through friends or relatives during wedding ceremonies, or family visits. Asserting this issue a female hotel employee stated:

*I spend a long time here in the hotel in the reception, especially in the tourism high season, which makes it difficult for me to participate in my*
friends’ and relatives’ occasions. So my absence in such occasions will lessen my marriage chances. Another thing is that I do not think any man will like to marry a female who stays out for long time in her work. Although, they get married to female physicians, the case is different as the latter get more paid which might be an advantage point for them.

In some hotels in Oman, employees commented that they get complaints from angry and abusive customers when they are under the influence of alcohol after they finish at the bar in the hotel.

In the night shift, we sometime face difficult situations when some of the customers get drunk and start fighting with each other or with us, which sometimes makes us call the police.

This issue reflects the stress that employees face during their work in the hospitality industry, which in turn conveys a negative image of the hospitality industry, and discourages Omanis from working in the industry.

5.5.3 Image of Hospitality Careers amongst Omani Society

The most fundamental challenge facing the hospitality industry is “the attraction and retention of the necessary number and quality of young people” (Lewis and Airey, 2001:7). It could be argued that while the future prosperity of the industry depends on the quality of its people, in Oman, the hospitality industry has failed, for a number of reasons, to project an image that could generate interest amongst Omanis. Consequently, it is difficult for anyone to present the industry as an attractive career option. So hospitality jobs amongst Omani society are considered of low rank and
status. Even though some jobs in the private sector, especially those involving manual work are attractive to Omanis (Eur, 2003).

The issue of the hospitality career image was raised by most of the interviewees, the government officials, the employers and the employees. One hotel human resource manager stated:

_We have few Omanis working in the hotel, but they always looking to move to another job out of the industry, because they say that their friends and relatives and other member of Omani society look at them as they are superior to them because they work in hotels as house keepers or porters or waiters._

(H3-3M)

The tourism industry and its sub-sectors suffer from a very poor image amongst potential job seekers, according to Jenkins (2001), although all students agreed with the statement that the hospitality industry is a growth industry with many career opportunities, they had an overall negative image of the industry, and become considerably less interested in selecting hospitality as their career of first choice.

One tourism academic also declared that:

_The students in the college studying this major, but they always say that they do not want to work in the hospitality industry because of the image that hotels have a very low image in the society._

(TA2-M)

The image that the society holds about hospitality jobs is of cooking and serving food for people. Although the hospitality industry, offers a variety of different jobs and career opportunities to suit everyone across the globe, for many people, the thought of a career in the hospitality, leisure and tourism industries may bring up the images of chefs, waiters, guides and cabin crews (Islam, 2008).
Various employees referred to the issue of serving people in the hotels as a low status job:

*My friends are always teasing me that I serve people in restaurant in the hotel, while most of families in the country are served by housemaids.*

(HE3-9M)

Working as a housekeeper was considered to be a very low status job in the industry amongst Omani society according to one hotel employee:

*I feel embarrassed to tell my friend that I work as a housekeeper in the hotel.*

(HE3-8M)

These two cases above illustrate the identity of the worker and how it affected by the job they do as mentioned in section 2.8.1.4. This consistent with what Ashforth and Humphry (1993) asserted about the worker identity. Individuals who strongly identify with their organisational role, feels more authentic when they conforming to role expectations. These two employees feel embraced that they work in the hotel and serve people. This confliction with their inner feeling of what they are doing, leads to emotive dissonance and they feel unauthentic. In other words, they do not feel themselves.

Another image about the hospitality industry is the lack of career advancement. Many graduates have very high expectations about jobs in the industry. In China, industry managers commented that young tourism graduates seem to have unrealistic career expectations. For example, they expect to get promoted from operative to managerial levels within two to three years in the hotel industry (Lam and Xiao, 2000). However, a commonly-held public belief considers hospitality jobs to be low-paying and lacking advancement potential (Sciarini, 1997). Industry reality seems to mirror the latter rather than the former observations:
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

We work in the same job for several years, but we do not get any promotion, even when we get training. We thought that when we get training and take courses, the hotel will promote us.

(HE5-2M)

Accordingly, from the discussion in this chapter, it can be said that the tangible efforts by the Omani government to Omanise the jobs in the hotel sector need to pay a significant attention to the different factors especially cultural and religious concerns in order to secure the implementation of the Omanisation Plan.

5.5.4 Hospitality Career Reputation

In oriental and conservative societies, like the Omani society, one of the challenges facing the development of the hospitality careers is the social and cultural reservations with regard to working in the tourism and hospitality sector, especially amongst communities living outside the capital area (Ministry of Tourism, 2002). Because of the reputation of the sector and the reluctance of Omanis to work in hotels, the work forces comprising the hospitality organisations in Oman are widely varied in terms of workers nationalities, backgrounds, cultural differences and qualifications. As pointed out in Chapter one, the structure of the industry in the Sultanate of Oman is mostly dominated by Asian workers, such as Filipinos, Indians, Indonesians, Chinese and other East Asian nationalities and there are few workers of Arab nationalities. As a result, the industry became less attractive to Omanis due to the perception of Omani society that this industry is considered a low salary, largely expatriate industry to work in. A male hotel employee supported this issue said:
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

I only work in the hotel because I could not find another job anywhere else, even my friends always comment on my job, and say that how come you work in a job which is usually only for Indian, Pakistanis and people from Asia.

(HE3-3M)

Another hotel human resource manager supported that issue about hospitality careers and said:

The hospitality careers do not have a good and acceptable reputation in Oman.

(H5-1M)

A tourism consultant added that; although nowadays some young Omanis work in the hospitality industry, their attitude towards their job is negative. They only work there because it is the only job available for them. But if they have the choice they will not work in this sector, because of the reputation of hospitality. In cases where they work in the sector, there are certain jobs that they do not like to do because of their perceived low status:

Nowadays there are some Omanis started to work in the hotels but not in all jobs, they still do not like to work as a chef, as a waiter, or in the bar or any other job they think is a low job.

(TC1-M)

Although the employers keen to choose the employees who portray a good image and maintain a distinct brand image of the hotel, however, the way the employees behave could be misinterpreted by customers particularly if the worker is female. When the employer ask the female employee to behave in certain way to the customer, for example if she is been asked to smile and talk in a nice way to the customer while providing the service. This behaviour could be interpreted in different way according to the customer culture. Some customers might be pleased that they have been served by a
good mannered worker. On the other hand, other customers might interpret this behaviour of aesthetic as being sexualised. In Omani society, where the religion bands woman from smiling and talking in soft way with a strange man which could be interpreted negatively, female workers avoid talking and smiling nicely to customers.

The relevant verse (32) in Surah Al-Ahzab (33) of The Noble Qur'an states:

\[
O \text{ Consorts of the Prophet! ye are not like any of the (other) women: if ye do fear (Allah) be not too complaisant of speech lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech (that is) just.}
\]

This illustrates what a female hotel employee mentioned about the sexual harassment faced in the hotel during her duty, and how customers interpreted her nice behaviour in a sexual way, and since she accepted to talk and smile to them, it means that she might agree to anything else.

\[
\text{Since I talked and served them nicely, they think that I might do anything else. That's why I want to move to another department.}
\]

The issue of the hejab could be more complicated if the hotel manager is an expatriate and not aware of the cultural and religious reservations in the society. In section 2.7, it has been noted that expatriates have an effect on the host country in terms of the differences between their original culture and the host country culture. This difference in two cultures might cause a conflict between what the manager asks for and what the employees believe in or how they behave with the customers.

The hotel human resource manager comments that:

\[
\text{The hotel manager is not Omani and he wanted to interfere in female's hejab and clothes but we told him we'll handle this, so we tried to make}
\]
changes about the uniform and tell them to wear something coloured and bright.

(H5-1M)

In this case where the expatriate manager wanted to interfere in female’s hejab, while the human resource manager who was Omani tried to solve the problem consistent with what Gliatis and Guerrier (1994) has asserted. They asserted that locals are appropriate to fill the positions personnel managers, whereas expatriates are appropriate for operational roles such as general manager, resident manager, food and beverage manager, and room division managers. Therefore, the local human resource manager alleviates the situation as he is more understanding of the cultural values and the Islamic codes which should be considered with regards to the female clothes.

It is also important to note that recruiting expatriate in some jobs is of benefit to the hotels, according to some human resource managers. Some of them prefer to recruit expatriate females as waitresses as they do not wear the hejab and do not mind wearing the uniforms.

One hotel human resource manager commented on the same issue:

\[ \text{The female expatriate workers do not mind wearing anything, at the same time we always keen to make sure that she does not wear anything conflict with the country’s culture and religion. It has to be acceptable by the country traditions and at the same time is not very strict.} \]

(H5-2M)

This shows how the employers place a strong emphasis on employees’ appearance, and how this is important for the hotel which will help organisations to create a distinct image and competitive advantage. It also expresses what has been discussed in (see section 2.8.1.2) about aesthetic skills and that appearance and looking of the employees
‘aesthetic skills’ is as important for the organisation as other skills if not more for some organisations.

It illustrates that the employers are always looking for the employees who can portray the image of the firm or the organisation. Therefore we can see that the hotel employers instruct the female on the way they wear their hejab to appeal to the sense of the customer, and to depict the hotel’s image.

Instruction manuals to new employees, in banks, hotels, department stores, etc. are full of explicit instructions with regards to employees’ clothes, hair length, hair style, jewellery, make-up, nails, shaving, and even more intimate and more difficult to control aspects of appearance, such as body weight and body odours (Shamir, 1980).

Another human resource manager commented on this issue by stating that:

A slice of the females who applied for vacancy in the hotel, told us that they do not like to wear uniform which consist of a shirt and trouser, which means that they can’t work in restaurants, receptions nor housekeeping, but they can work in any other job where they can wear their regular clothes.

(H3-1M)

This confirms that hotel employers always keen to recruit the right person in the right place and are also keen about dress codes and standard uniforms. So if they found that the applicant is hesitating to wear the uniform, then they either select him or her for a job where they do not have to wear uniform or reject the application if the hotel does not have a vacant position for the applicant.
5.7 Summary

It has been mentioned in section 5.1 the driving forces for the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector. It has also been discussed in this chapter the issues hinder the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector as revealed from different perspectives. The issues being discussed were raised by government official, tourism consultant, tourism academics, hotel employers and hotel employees. Figure 5.1 maps the restraining forces of the implementation of Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector. It could be said that there are different forces holding back the implementation of the Omanisation Plan.

Recruitment and selection of employees by the employers is one of the important issues, where employers always use cheaper ways to recruit employees. This resulted in high labour turnover, and affects the retention of Omani employees.

Furthermore, comparing between the Public and Private sectors, Omanis prefer working in the Public sector, where they feel more secure, and get high remuneration, and working hours are limited. Although some jobs in the Public sector require long working hours or night shifts, Omanis justify that with the incentives they get from the job, which can be a motivation to do the work, and that the time is payable in these cases.

Working condition is also another restraining force hinders Omanis from working in hotels. Employees consider the jobs in hotels are of servile nature. The other restraining forces with regards working conditions are the long working hours, and night shifts. These unsocial hours are one of the reasons deterring Omani males and females from working in the hotels due to the conflict between the job and the family and social
commitments. Working conditions are also another reason. This idea is based on the heavy workload of the worker in the industry, which causes physical and psychological stress.

Another force which holds Omanis back from working or continuing to work in the hotel sector is that of the skills gaps and skills shortage. According to the field work results, hotel human resource managers complain about the unskilled Omanis, when they always recruit unqualified Omanis to do the jobs to save the cost of recruiting qualified ones. As a result, graduates do not apply for the jobs in the hotels due to the low pay. On the other hand, hotel employers do not provide Omanis with the required training, and Omani employees also complain about the lack of training they get in the hotels. Lack of foreign language skills amongst Omani employees is another restraining force of recruiting Omanis; this in turn encourages employers to recruit more expatriates.

Another important force plays a major and dominant role in shaping Omanis lives, behaviours and their attitudes as an Arab and Muslim nation. The primacy of religion in the Omani context is the force of Islam and Islamic doctrines as revealed from the field work interviews with different stakeholders. This issue is based on different aspects. First of all, some employees are concerned about the source of income because of the idea that since the hotel business is based on some unlawful activities such as serving alcohol, pork and ham in their food menu, gambling, and allowing uncouple married to get rooms in the hotel, so this mean that their source of income is unlawful since they earn it from non-permissible activities. Another aspect is that serving alcohol, which according to Islam, is unlawful (haram) (chapter 2: section, 2.9.1) is another restraining
force deterring Omanis from working in hotels because concern of these that their sources of income should be from lawful sources and not derived from any kind of non-permissible activities. The female outfit was one of the female concerns with regards to working in hotels. Besides, family obligations for married females, and marriage opportunity for single females was another concerns. The image of the industry and its reputation amongst the Omani society resulted that the industry became less attractive to the Omanis if compared to other industries.

This means that the proposed plan would not work properly if nothing is done to change the image. To increase the likelihood of success of Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector, stakeholders (government, industry, educational institutions) can work together to attempt to reduce restraining forces, increase driving forces, or some combination of the two.
Chapter Five: Constraints to Omanisation in the Hotel Industry

Figure 5.1 Issues in the Hotel Industry in the Sultanate of Oman
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction ................................................................. 292
6.2 Overview of the Issues in the Omani Hotel Industry and Responsibilities of Stakeholders .................................................. 292
6.3 Recommendations for Government ..................................... 295
6.4 Recommendations for Employers (Industry) ......................... 298
6.5 Recommendations for Educational Institutions ..................... 301
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

It is possible, as a result of this study, to make some recommendations, to help pinpoint the real problems, the weaknesses, and deficiencies in the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hospitality industry.

6.2 Overview of the Issues in the Omani Hotel Industry and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The discussion of the field work results in the previous chapter (5) revealed that issues facing the hotel industry in the Sultanate of Oman are similar to the issues facing the industry globally. Notwithstanding, there are some issues which might have more implications on the hotel industry in Arabic and Muslim countries including the Sultanate of Oman. The issues revealed from the field work was recruitment and selection, high labour turnover and poor staff retention, lack of job continuity and security, low remuneration, poor working conditions, qualifications and training, cost of training, skills gaps and skills shortage, lack of foreign language skills. Other issues which have very critical implications on the hotel industry and hinder the implementation of Omanisation Plan are the social and cultural issues. Although these issues are evident in other Middle Eastern and Muslim countries, due to the similarities of religion and geographical topographies, however societies across the world vary in their features and traditions, as well as on the extent of their implementation of Islamic principles and country costumes and traditions. These issues include: religious issues which include unlawful food and beverages, unlawful activities, source of income,
mixing between males and females, and female outfit. Other issues are family and social attitudes towards hospitality careers which includes; region of origin, family influence on career choice, family obligations, marriage opportunity. In addition to these issues, the image of hospitality careers amongst Omani society, and hospitality career reputations are other cultural and social issues.

Employment, education and training, and cultural and social issues altogether are issues affect the implementation of Omanisation Plan in the hotel industry in the sultanate of Oman. Figure (6.1) shows that these issues are very correlated and connected to each other in their impact on the Omanisation Plan implementation.

**Figure 6.1: Issues in the Hotel Industry and its Relation to Implementation of Omanisation Plan.**

Tackling the issues facing the industry is a complex task due to the overlapping responsibilities between stakeholders (Government, Industry, and Educational Institutions), and in order to solve these issues and to assist Omanisation Plan implementation, stakeholders' efforts should be united (Figure 6.2).
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

Figure 6.2: Different Stakeholders Working to Assist the Omanisation Plan.

For instance, the industry is responsible for the issues of recruitment and selection, labour turnover and staff retention, as well as improving the remuneration and working conditions. The issues of qualifications and training, skills gaps and skills shortage, and enhancing foreign language skills are the responsibilities of the institutions which need to provide trainees with the required skills. Improving the image of the hotel industry amongst Omani society is an industry responsible. However, there are some issues which cannot be resolved unless a strong link between stakeholders is built, due to the overlapping nature of these issues. For instance, although, the issue of remuneration and working conditions is an industry responsibility, we cannot ignore the government role to solve this issue through regulations and legislations. The issue of the industry’s image is also complex and requires concerted efforts between industry, educational institutions and government. It is important to portray the hospitality career in better image to attract people to the industry. This can not be done unless all stakeholders cooperate together. Therefore, it is possible to make some recommendation for different stakeholders to assist the success of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector.
6.3 Recommendations for Government

- First of all, it is essential to have unity of effort with both Public and Private sectors working together. For the public to realise the real need for manpower in the industry, as well as for the latter to have an autonomous responsibility for its own performance, better co-ordination is required. This must be coupled with a need to raise the level of skill and knowledge and improve the supply of manpower to satisfy present and future needs.

- Since wages was one of the most important internal factors involved in the findings and discussed by all parties, immediate action needs to be taken to increase the minimum wage in the hospitality industry for number of reasons. Most obviously the industry needs to offer its employees a good standard living. This will encourage and attract Omanis including (high school leavers and graduates) to work in the sector, which in turn will decrease the dependence on expatriate labours in both managerial and supervisory level employment. This will also help to reduce the turnover amongst the Omani employees in the sector.

- Existing legislations and regulations have been a barrier to recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Therefore the government should give priority to reviewing these regulations with regard to wages and other benefits, to encourage Omanis towards the private sector.

- Increasing the minimum wage of Omanis will for sure affect the implementation of the Omanisation Plan and increase the number of Omanis willing to work in the private sector as the existing minimum wage that applies to Omanis creates a negative financial incentive for further Omanisation.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

- A stronger link and closer relationship needs to be built between not only the Public and Private sector, but also with tourism and hospitality educational institutions and the industry, to understand the deficiencies and weaknesses of hotel graduates in order to reach the required standards in line with labour market needs of the hotel sector. This will encourage employers to recruit Omanis, and will restore the issue of skills gaps and skills shortages among Omani employees.

- To activate the Omanisation Plan in the tourism sector in general and in the hotel sector specifically, a comparison between Omani worker and expatriate workers needs to be conducted, taking into account the effect of expatriate workers from different dimensions; political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and ecological dimensions in order to tackle this problem and encourage Omanis to replace them in different positions in the industry.

- A written contract need to be assigned between hotel employers and employees including all the working conditions such as; salaries, holidays and all other conditions which protect both employer and employees rights. These contracts need to be monitored by the government and relevant Ministries to ensure the implementation of the Omanisation Plan and to protect both employees and employers.

- A follow up from the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Tourism of Omani employment records in the industry is very essential to make sure that the Omanisation Plan is not only concern about number of Omanis on papers, but on the practical side in the industry.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

- The poor image of the industry was a common issue raised by all interviewees; therefore the Omani government should integrate tourism and hotel studies into the national education system, at least in high school level year 10 and 11 in order to increase the awareness and perception of tourism and hotel jobs, and to assist the youngsters in their early ages when making decisions about their future jobs.

- The government, and in particular the Ministry of Education, which supervises secondary education in the country, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, and other institutions, should strive to reverse the negative perception towards vocational education, and towards tourism and hospitality studies by projecting the true qualities and uniqueness of such an educational experiences. The researcher strongly believes that the government should undertake all necessary measures to enhance the image and reputation of tourism and hospitality education to the public. This can be achieved through the effective utilisation of the media and the curriculum in the schools.

- The government should establish a specific body or committee devoted to the hotel sector, to provide the sector with the support for necessary programmes, and helps assess and monitor the impact of employment legislation and regulation in the sector. The committee should comprise members from the Ministry of Education for the school curriculum, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Manpower, and Institutions of tourism and hospitality studies, and from industry to understand the market requirements.
It is important to draw the attention of the officials at the Ministry of Manpower to outline measures that would preserve the rights of the private sector. Otherwise the Private sector might become a bridge through which trained and qualified Omani youths pass on to work ultimately in the Public sector. Therefore, the need to specify a period for the Omanis working in the Private sector to remain in their establishments before they are allowed to apply for vacant posts in the Public sector is a very important aspect. Such measures would preserve the private sectors right in benefiting from trained staff for as long as it could. This would also enable the Private sector to train other workers who would fill the vacuum created by the transfer of employees to the Public sector.

6.4 Recommendations for Employers (Industry)

- To ensure successful implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the sector, hotel employers should encourage Omani employees and Omani graduates to enter the labour market. Achieving this could be through positive discrimination by specifying in job advertisements that applicants should be Omani. Employers also need to recognise the abilities of Omanis and believe that they can do the job to the same level as expatriate workers.

- Hotel employers should develop incentives to attract and retain qualified employees, which can be achieved through increasing benefits over wages, special compensations for long working hours, or for working during national and religious holidays.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

- Furthermore, the employers need to pay attention to the training and development of their employees to provide them with career progression opportunities within the hotel sector, and to ensure that career paths are visible to existing and potential employees. This could be done through encouragement of existed employees for training and enhance their skills for job promotions to help increase the retention of the employees and decrease the turnover.

- It is important also to encourage the internal labour market for recruitment in the case that the skills available within the hotel. This will help the career progression for the employees. Recruitment from the external labour market should be only an option when the internal labour market lack of skills.

- Hotel employers should also give high consideration and compare between the cost of training for existed employees who are willing to continue working in the industry and the recruitment cost of casual employees or expatriate employment.

- Hotel employers need to provide more chances for Omani graduates with the required qualifications, to work in hotels, and pay them acceptable levels of remuneration which should help to encourage them into the sector, hence replacing the expatriates in the sector. By this, hotel employers can save the expatriate expenses such as; the annual card renewals, health insurance, their family allowance and other expenses and could use these expenses to recruit Omanis instead.

- Hotels should visit local schools and introduce the hotel industry as a possible career for school leavers by developing hotel industry 'role models'. 
For further development for both employers and employees the remuneration should distinguish trained workers from untrained ones. As such point may give more opportunities for the trained workers who got training from a certain firm to get other job opportunities from the other firm which as a result may cause a loss to the first firm. In order to prevent such a loss the meant firm might increase the given wage to the trained employees after the training period more the untrained ones. Untrained employees should also be encouraged to develop their skills in order to progress their careers in the industry.

There has been little attention paid to the role played by selectors’ knowledge of the local labour market, therefore more understanding about recruitment and selection techniques could decrease the high labour turnover in the hotel industry.

It is also important to reach the students in schools, and provide them with the right information about the industry. In addition to the student, information is also absorbed on a regular basis by the teachers, guidance counselors, parents and school administrators, and the industry should provide them with the required knowledge and information about the industry, portraying the hospitality industry as a vibrant business, offering young people great career opportunities.

Hospitality stakeholders should not only strive to change society’s misperceptions about the industry, but they should also concentrate their efforts on improving the actual conditions of the industry by increasing pay and improving the conditions of the work in line with Islamic and cultural
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

perspectives. This could be through the expansion of Islamic hotels across the country. This strategy will give the employees more diverse opportunities. It will also help attract more local employees, especially those who are very strict in religious terms.

- Hospitality career days at local colleges and schools can increase the awareness of the Omani society about the hospitality industry.

- To encourage women to enter the labour market, a special hospitality career day can be held in local colleges or schools, or in cooperation with Omani Women Associations in the Sultanate.

6.5 Recommendations for Educational Institutions

- Hospitality professionals could visit secondary schools in order to conduct informative speeches and presentations to the students. This face-to-face interaction would most certainly enhance students' awareness since it will enable them to express their concerns regarding the industry and receive comprehensive responses by industry professionals. Along those lines, individual students who expressed their interest towards such professions could be invited to visit a particular establishment with their parents, interact with employees and managers, discuss career potential, and review the physical demands and rewards of the industry.

- Hospitality education institutions should maintain a relevant curriculum in order to meet the needs of the hotel industry labour market and the hospitality industry needs to share their experiences with educational institutions.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

- It is important to build a closer link between educational institutions and stakeholders (government, industry, and society) to move towards the professionalisation of the entire sector and to improving the knowledge base and innovative and economic capabilities.

- Career guidance counsellors or career advisors for hospitality jobs can help to reduce employee recruitment costs, and will help in advising and guiding students to make realistic choices about their education, training and work.

- Given the scale of likely human resource demand and the competition from around the world for the best service talent, hotel owners and operators need to take a long term perspective and think strategically about how as an industry they will educate sufficient staff in the hotel sector in Oman to meet the future demands of the industry from Omani employees rather than expatriate workers. This may be an opportunity for collective action by all stakeholders in the industry to invest in the primary, secondary and tertiary education of future hotel staff.

- The hospitality industry not only needs to educate potential students about the industry, but they must also accurately inform parents as they have an important influence on their children. Parents must understand that the industry provides desirable management level careers. More accurate information should be supplied by the tourism/hospitality industry, with personnel managers and those responsible for recruitment and training taking a more active and visible role within the schools.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

- Understanding the key role that tribe, family and community in Oman play in the career choices of graduates and school leavers, requires educators to reach beyond traditional youth audiences. It is important to engage the parents in understanding the vital role they play in youngsters' occupational choice. Developing collaborative programmes with innovative strategies that engage youth, parents, and community will require youth educators to become effective in managing collaborative partnerships that can help change stakeholders' perceptions of their role in youngsters' career selection.

- To increase awareness amongst Omani society, information campaigns should be started at the elementary or pre-school level, targeting children from 3 years old. This programme has been provided by Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) to connect students, parents and educators to career opportunities through business partnerships, training and resources (MEBA, 2008). For instance for elementary and pre-school level internal such a colouring book increases awareness among elementary.
CHAPTER SEVEN: FINAL OVERVIEWS

7.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................. 306
7.2 Review of Research Objectives ............................................................................ 306
  7.2.1 Objective One ..................................................................................................... 306
  7.2.2 Objective Two .................................................................................................... 309
  7.2.3 Objective Three ................................................................................................. 313
  7.2.4 Objective Four .................................................................................................... 316
7.3 Major Findings ....................................................................................................... 316
  7.3.1 Employment Issues ........................................................................................... 316
  7.3.2 Education and Training Issues ......................................................................... 318
  7.3.3 Cultural and Social Issues ................................................................................ 319
7.4 Contributions .......................................................................................................... 323
  7.4.1 Contribution to Theory ...................................................................................... 323
  7.4.2 Contribution to Practice .................................................................................... 323
7.5 Limitations ............................................................................................................. 324
7.6 Opportunities for Further Research ...................................................................... 326
7.7 Personal Thoughts ................................................................................................. 327
CHAPTER SEVEN: FINAL OVERVIEWS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this study on Omani employment in the hotel sector, and the implications of the Omanisation Plan on the sector. Section 7.2 reviews the research objectives and the extent of its achievement. The major research findings will be presented in section 7.3, followed by section 7.4 which presents the significant contribution of the study in relation to theory and practice. Limitations and opportunities for further research are presented in section 7.5 and 7.6. The chapter then concludes with the researcher's personal thoughts through the research stages in section 7.7.

7.2 Review of Research Objectives

7.2.1 Objective One

To make a contribution to an under-researched area by reviewing the literature on the tourism and hospitality industry and the issues related to employment in the hotel industry, as well as highlighting the socio-cultural dimensions in terms of how religions, notably Islam, and societies, particularly Omani society influence individuals' behaviours which impact on their choice of career.

This objective was achieved through a critical review of the literature on human resources (HR), the importance of human resource management (HRM) and the historical development of HRM. It also examined HRM in the hospitality industry as a vital component in any organisation. This was followed by a discussion of issues in the hospitality industry, and how religious and societies influence individuals' life.
A review of the literature (e.g. Schuler, 1998; Stredwick, 2000; Bratton and Gold, 2003; Legge, 2005) highlights the chronological development of the HRM term and the importance of HRM in any organisation to help managers address large numbers of problems in their organisation, ranging from a constantly changing workforce to coping with the ever-present sources of government regulations. It also highlights the three main responsibilities for HRM: to attract an effective workforce, to develop an effective workforce, and to maintain an effective workforce.

Another element highlighted from the literature (e.g. Schuler, 1998; Ross, 1999; Dessler, 2000) is the importance of HRM in the hospitality industry as a result of the high levels of competition between the large numbers of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Managing the human resources in any organisation will help the organisation in different ways, to hire the right person for the right job, to lessen the employee's high turnover, will also help the employee to fulfil their potential which will help the company or the organisation to avoid any discriminatory actions and to ensure fair treatment of their employees in their payment, training, labour practices, and career development.

Career paths in the hospitality industry is another issue highlighted in the literature review (Super, 1957; Baum 1995; Arthur et al, 1998; Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 1998; Ayres, 2006; Ladkin, 2000; Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001; Shiller, 2003), whilst hospitality careers are considered "hot" careers for reasons such as; technology, intense competition, shrinking world borders, economic growth, and increased levels of guest expectations, many employees see hospitality as a job, but not a life career. This,
therefore, results in skills shortages in the industry because of unattractive career environment.

To restore the issue of skills shortages in the industry, employers attempt to recruit their employees either internally or externally. Hence, it was important to shed lights on internal and external labour market, and understand how it influences the choice of employees.

The literature revealed that some organisations restore the skills shortages through expatriate employment which has different implications on the organisation itself in one hand, and on the host country on the other.

As emerged from the literature, HR issues in the hospitality industry can be classified to three main areas: employment factors, education and training factors and cultural and social factors (Figure 2.2).

There are number of universal HR issues facing the industry, and affecting employees (Denvir and McMahon, 1992; Getz, 1994; Cheng and Brown, 1998; Malhotra, 2002; Nickson, 2002; Kusluvan, 2003) particularly when the industry is seen as a job opportunity but not a life time career, such as; low wages, poor working conditions, poor attitudes, and lack of security and promotion, long working hours, the employees are being seen as cheap labour and burden. Training is considered as another issue facing employees in the industry as it has been limited, and the industry has not sought highly trained and qualified staff, as a result of this, the staff turnover is very high.

It was also revealed from the literature that employers when recruit theirs employees, they place a very high importance on aesthetic labour (Witz et al., 2003; Warhurst et al., 2004; Pender and Sharpley, 2005; Nickson, 2007). The employers increasingly desire
employees who look good and sound right. They also train their employees how to manage their emotions to satisfy their customers (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993; Hochschild, 2003; Chappel, 2004). This might result in emotional confliction if the employee’s real feeling different than what is being displayed. Therefore, this confliction or dissonance of feeling might lead to a weak worker identity (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993; Guenier and Adib, 2001; Marsh and Musson, 2008).

Another issue emphasised in the literature review is that religions and societies have a very strong and noticeable influence on individual behaviours, and often shape their lives. This influence even extends to career choice. In many countries, religion has a certain degree of influence on the cultural characteristics of their people and affects most of their life aspects. This influence is far more extensive in the countries which are expressly modelled on a religious ideal. This religious influence is also evident in some Arab and Islamic countries where hotel work is considered to be an unlawful job. This is because hotels are involved in some un-Islamic transactions such as; providing alcohol and pork on their menu, as well as the female uniform, and allowing some unlawful activities (according to the Muslim religion) such as allowing unmarried couples to stay in the same room. These issues together portray the negative image of hospitality industry and make it less attractive to the potential employees than other industries.

7.2.2 Objective Two
To explore and establish the context of the Sultanate of Oman, and to review the current profile of Omani tourism, as well as to review the Omanisation Plan of the hotel sector.
Chapter Seven: Final Overviews

This objective was achieved through a comprehensive analysis of relevant documents in relation to the Oman economy, Oman tourism, and government plans for tourism development. The research revealed that the Sultanate of Oman is aware of the need to diversify the economy to lessen its reliance on the oil sector. The 2020 vision of the Omani economy calls for a number of adjustments including the reinforcement of the economic and financial stability of the country, reshaping the role of the government and privatising the public sector; including tourism, globalisation of the Omani economy and upgrading the skills of the Omani workforce.

The country vision for 2020 focuses on two areas; economic diversification in order to reduce oil’s domination of the economy, so that the oil sector’s contribution to GDP can be decreased from 41% in 1996 to about 9% in 2020; and the policy of ‘Omanisation’, the replacement of migrant workers with Omani nationals, which will underpin education, training and employment policies and practice (Ministry of National Economy, 2001; Ministry of Information, 2004).

With regards to economic diversification, the country focuses on different areas; one of the areas is developing the tourism industry for its potential to play a vital economic and social role in the country.

One of the main goals of tourism in Oman is to increase tourism’s contribution to the GDP to 5% by the end of 2020 and to create more employment opportunities for the thousands of Omani graduates to activate Omanisation as one of the key focuses of vision 2020.

The research further revealed government efforts to develop the tourism sector and its sub-sectors, and the development of the Omani workforce to fill the job opportunities
associated with new tourism development. Oman 2020 objectives involve the provision of employment opportunities in both the Omani Public and Private sectors and training and qualifications in a manner suitable to the labour market, as well as the co-operation between the two sectors to help develop the human resources in the hotel sector.

To achieve this objective a critical review was carried out of the Omanisation Plan for the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as an analysis of statistical data from the Ministries of National Economy, and of Tourism. As one of the key areas of Vision 2020 is the Omanisation of the workforce, the government of the Sultanate of Oman made a commitment to educate, train and develop its national workforce as a measure towards nation building and economic development.

The research findings revealed that the Sultanate of Oman gives priority to the implementation of the Omanisation Plan for various reasons.

Firstly, to decrease the enormous inflow of foreign labour, who carry the customs and traditions of their home countries which might have a negative impact on the culture of Oman as the host country. Secondly, to address the increasing volume of remittances of these foreign employees, which negatively impact on the balance of payments of Oman as the host country through leakage. Thirdly, the provision of infrastructure and basic services to this segment of the population creates a heavy economic burden on the host country. Finally, decreasing the social repercussion and the potential for Omani job seekers to deviate due to frustration and despair as a result of their failure to find a job.

With regards to the Omanisation Plan for the tourism sector, the research findings revealed that the Omanisation Plan for the sector includes the following different sub-sectors: airlines, tourist restaurants, tours and travel agencies, hotels, and tourist car rentals.
Chapter Seven: Final Overviews

The government results for 2002 revealed that the Omanisation Plan for the tourism sector has already exceeded the 50% target planned for 2005. However, there were significant inequalities between the sectors. For example, the Airline sector reach 74.03% compared to other sectors such as Tourist Restaurant (30.72%), Tours and Travel Agencies (42.78%), and Hotels (39.11%). Therefore, this research attempted to investigate the reasons which prevent the application of Omanisation to the hotel sector.

The research also revealed that the government has expended a lot of effort to Omanise the jobs in the hotel sector, and give high attention to train and educate Omanis to enter the labour market with required qualifications. Yet despite these government efforts in the training and education of Omanis, the number of expatriate workers in this sector is still outstripping the number of Omani employees. The government is also aware of the increased number of Omani graduates who are seeking jobs, and is concerned about the image that tourist may draw from the country because they are served by expatriate workers instead of Omanis, and the negative implications for the tourist experience of authentic Omani service.

The data from the Ministry of National Economy (2006) with regards to Omanisation in the Public and Private sectors, is that the Omanisation ratio did not change much as it increased from (34%) to (34.3%) between 1995 and 2000. Therefore, the planned Omanisation ratio for total labour in 2000 which is estimated at (38.9%) has not been achieved, which highlights the importance of this investigation.
7.2.3 Objective Three

To explore the human resource issues faced by Omani hotel employers and the socio-cultural factors and Islamic doctrine that hinder Omanis from working in the hotel industry in order to illustrate barriers to hospitality employment and the paradoxical link between selection of tourism as a vehicle for diversification of the Omani economy in the context of the Omanisation Plan.

This objective was addressed through semi-structured interviews with nine government officials, nine hotel employers and twenty-seven hotel employees. The research findings identified different issues related to the hotel industry which can be viewed as barriers to the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the industry. The issues revealed from the field-work analysis were classified into three main factors, each with sub-factors. The main factors were employment factors, education and training factors, and cultural and social factors.

The employment issues emerged from the field work in the hotel industry in the Sultanate of Oman were identified as; recruitment and selection, this issue is one of the critical issues that affect the continuity of Omanis in the hotel sector as most of employers use informal methods to recruit their employees. They rely more on word of mouth method and recommendations from existing staff rather than formal methods like newspapers advertisements. Employers consider these informal methods as cheaper methods, however, this result that they choose unqualified employees which affects the level of the service provided. It also affects the implementation of OP as most of existing employees are expatriates and their preferences will be staff from their nationalities. High labour turnover and poor staff retention are another issues in the hotel industry affects the implementation of OP. These issues are linked to other issues
such as recruitment and selection methods, low remuneration and poor working conditions, it also connected to the socio-cultural and religion issues. Job continuity and security is another issue that employees consider on the basis that working in the hotel sector means that they work in the private sector. Employees consider working in the private sector compared is less secure than working in the public or government sector. The hotel industry in the Sultanate is also suffering from low remuneration and poor working conditions, which hinder Omanis from working in the industry and choose it as a life career.

The education and training issues which emerged from the fieldwork were classified as: qualifications and training, cost of training, skills gaps and skills shortages, and lack of foreign language skills. The issue of qualifications and training is a complex issue as raised by all stakeholders. The tourism academics and government official confirmed that they provide students with required training. However, employers complained about the outcome of the educational institution that they are lack of skills, and lack foreign language skills. At the same time, employees also complain that they do not get any further training during their work other than the training at the entry level, as this kind of training according to hotel employers considered to be costly. Employers concern that if they provide employees with further training, employers will ask for promotions and salary increments. Employers also think that developing employees could encourage them to leave the organisation after they get further training. These issue result that the industry is suffering from the skills gaps and skills shortages.

Cultural and social issues were classified into: religious issues, family and social attitudes towards hospitality careers, image of hospitality careers amongst Omani society, and hospitality career reputations.
The cultural and social factors play a major role in employment in the hotel industry in the Sultanate of Oman. This influence is derived from religious and society influences on individuals’ behaviour. In the Sultanate of Oman, religion, tribes, and families have a very noticeable impact on people lives, and people always behave within their religious beliefs and traditional customs.

It has been found from the field work that the most influential and noticeable reasons which deter Omanis from working in the hotel industry are social and cultural reasons. This was emphasised by all interviewees. They all pointed out that even if work in the hotel industry had a better environment in terms of pay, working conditions, and job security, Omanis would still refrain from working in the industry because of their beliefs that this kind of job is involves in unlawful activities, and they do not want to take this job as a life career but only as a temporary job until they find a better job in another organisation. Omanis main concerns are about the unlawful food and beverages, and unlawful activities involved in the hotel jobs. They are also concerned about their source of income which is questionable income for some employees as to whether it is lawful or unlawful, and, as Muslims, they prefer to avoid it. Other issues such as mixing between males and females, female outfits, influence of the family on career choice, family obligations for married females, marriage opportunities for single females, image of the hospitality careers, and hospitality career reputation are issues play a key role in the extent of Omani interest and desire to work in hotels for both men and women alike.

All of these issues together are being paradoxical in terms of selecting tourism as a vehicle to diversify the economy and implement the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector.
7.2.4 Objective Four

To provide recommendations for key stakeholders to help address the issues relating to hotel employment and Omanisation of the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

A set of practical recommendations have been developed, as a result of this study, for the key stakeholders in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman, government, industry, and educational institutions. On the basis of the overlapping of responsibilities between stakeholders, recommendations have been developed to these stakeholders to assist the success of the Omanisation Plan. These recommendations will help tackle issues relating to hotel employment in an Islamic/Omani context and thus increase the feasibility of the implementation of the Omanisation Plan and awareness of hospitality careers within Omani society.

7.3 Major Findings

As a result of this research, a number of findings were identified which were classified into three categories; first category is employment issues. The second category is the educational and training issues in the Omani hotel industry. Third category is the cultural and social issues faced by the hotel industry in the Sultanate of Omani.

7.3.1 Employment Issues

The employment issues found from the field work were recruitment and selection, high labour turnover and poor staff retention, lack of job continuity and security, low remuneration and poor working conditions.
Recruitment and selection is another employment factor affecting employment in the hotel sector. The research findings revealed that some of the 5 and 4 star hotels use both informal and formal methods for recruitment and selection of their employees, whilst three star hotels tend to recruit their employees through informal methods, which cost less than formal methods. Employers consider informal methods as cheaper methods, however, this result that they choose unqualified employees which affects the level of the service provided. It also affects the implementation of OP as most of existing employees are expatriates and their preferences will be staff from their nationalities.

The hotel sector (including 5-4-3 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman) face enduring issues of high labour turnover and staff retention for different reasons including; low wages, reputation of the hospitality jobs, working hours, security and continuity of the job, and the Islamic perspective of hotel work.

The research findings also highlighted another employment factor as an issue in the hotel sector and as a barrier to the implementation of Omanisation, specifically the low remuneration and poor working conditions. This issue is one of the most effective and important factors that deters graduates or young Omanis from working in the hospitality industry.

Working hours are considered another issue, as hospitality involves working anti-social hours, and in particular, special or public holidays, which are considered an issue because employees are not able to spend social holidays with their families, because of the nature of their work.

Another issue commonly raised by all stakeholders is job continuity and security. Concerns about continuity and job security were key reasons why Omanis prefer to
work in the Government sector, rather than choosing careers in tourism and hospitality which is predominantly Private-sector based. This is based on the idea that the Public sector is more secure than the private sector and offers a better working environment for its employees.

7.3.2 Education and Training Issues

Education and training issues were identified as; qualifications cost of training, skills gaps and skills shortages, and lack of foreign language skills. In the Sultanate, there are a number of established training and education institutions capable of providing the necessary hospitality and tourism training and education. However, with regards to hospitality education some issues were revealed in relation to the efforts in Oman and the training of the employees for the industry.

Firstly, the lack of qualified Omani employees to work in the hotels in Oman is one of the key issues facing the industry, which leads the employers to recruit expatriates, this affects the implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the industry, as the number of Omani employees is diluted by expatriates with the required skills.

Secondly, graduates from colleges and universities refuse to work in hotels because of the low salaries and poor reputation of hotel careers. As a result, of this the hotels recruit poorly qualified employees, and provide them with in-house training to fill their job vacancies.

Training is considered to be costly; therefore not all of the hotels have sufficient funds to train and develop their employees. Nevertheless, training cannot be viewed as a ‘luxury’ for hotel employees. For the sector in Oman to develop, a long-term funded training strategy must be adopted.
One of the important issues with regards to training and development, which is a common problem across the industry world-wide, is that it is associated with employee turnover. Also hotel employers believe that employees use the training and the development as a key gateway to pass to another job in another organisation with better pay. Hence, they are reluctant to fund this type of progression.

Furthermore, the industry in Oman suffers from skills gaps and skills shortages in some positions such as managerial positions, technical jobs and chefs, which is a result of the reluctance of qualified Omanis to work in the industry.

One of the most common reasons behind recruiting expatriates in the hotel industry in the Sultanate is the lack of foreign languages skills and lack of management qualifications amongst Omani employees. Although some Omanis speak English, Urdu, and Swahili, there is a need for other languages to be learned by employees in order to meet the needs of other tourists from non-English speaking countries.

7.3.3 Cultural and Social Issues

These issues were identified as; religious issues, family and social attitudes towards hospitality careers, image of the industry amongst Omani society, and hospitality career reputation.

Notwithstanding the training institutions and government efforts to Omanise the jobs in the sector, religious and cultural and social factors are the most influential factors among others in attracting and retaining Omanis to hotels careers. The underlying reason for this is the fact that Omani society is dominated by Islamic values and social traditions.
Chapter Seven: Final Overviews

The research findings reflect that along with the multicultural workforce, the industry is also facing religious and social conflicts regarding the refusal of many graduates to work in jobs which are categorised as an Islamically unacceptable source of income. These rejections can hardly be changed by enforcement because it clashes with the Islamic perspectives which are the most dynamic and all-encompassing factors in Muslim life.

One of the religious constraints with regards to working in hotels is that employees are concerned about unlawful activities such as the serving of alcohol and other activities being carried out in the hotel. These issues, raised by some employees explain why the income from working in such hotels is unlawful.

The research findings illustrate that some Omani families are conservative to the extent that they object to their children working in the hotel sector. It has also been revealed that some employees especially females are concerned about mixing between males and females during their work in hotels. Notwithstanding, jobs in other sectors might involve mixing between males and females, but because of the reputation of the hotel industry, this mixing is deemed unacceptable by Omani society.

Female outfits are also another issue which deters females from working in the hotel industry. Although, employers in the industry place a very high emphasis on the aesthetic skills of employees and their appearance and always keen to have employees who look good and sound right, in Omani society where females have to wear their clothes according to the Islamic codes and society traditions, they find that working in the hotel industry is not the job they want because of the employers’ instructions that their hejab should not be worn in a restrictive way.
The research findings also revealed that parents have a major influence on their children with regards to their choice of study and/or choice of career. Furthermore, it is not only parents that have a direct influence on career choice of young Omanis, but their relatives and friends influence them as well.

Family obligation is one of the constraints on the choice of as a hospitality career for females in Oman. The long working hours, the shifts, and working during holidays were reasons raised by the female employees in the sampled hotels as constraints on hospitality as a career, as all of these reasons conflict with family obligations. This is evidenced in the careers literature (Riley, 1996; Hjalager, 2003; Cleveland, 2007) that the long working hours and night shifts conflict with social and family commitments.

For single females, working in the hotel industry lessen their marriage opportunities, which is basis on the idea that hotel industry is not a preferred environment work for females, this therefore affect the females reputation and reduce their marriage opportunity.

The findings from some employees interviewed in this research revealed that working in hotels is not the job they want, and therefore it is not the job which can bring them self-esteem or satisfaction. This illustrates the negative image of the sector in Oman, which is evidently a major deterrent to working in the sector and demonstrates servility issues (Shamir, 1980; Hill 2002) which also affects their identities (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993; and Parkinson et al. 2005).
One of the challenges facing the development of hospitality careers is the social and cultural reservations with regards to working in the tourism and hospitality sector as a result of the reputation of hospitality careers.

Female harassment is another finding from the research, which affects the reputation of hospitality careers as a low status job, which does not respect females in the workplace. Linked to this is another issue related to social traditions, that the female dress in hotels conflicts with what is acceptable from the perspective of Omani society as appropriate Islamic female dress. This is also associated with the feeling of employees that they have to control their feelings and accept difficult customer behaviour as they have to display emotions different than what they really feel (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993; Fineman, 1996; Hochschild, 2003)

Whilst the future prosperity of the hotel industry in Oman depends on the quality of its people, in Oman, the hospitality industry has failed, for a number of reasons, to project an image that could generate interest amongst Omanis. Consequently, it is difficult for anyone to present the industry as an attractive career option and amongst Omani society hospitality jobs are considered to be one of the lowest jobs. Herein, lies the paradox with the Omanisation Plan. At the highest levels, the Omanisation Plan is promoted, yet the characteristics and the very nature of the hotel sector are in direct conflict with Islamic doctrines which are embedded in Omani life and society.
7.4 Contributions

7.4.1 Contribution to Theory

Currently this area of study is considerably unexplored; therefore this thesis makes a pioneering contribution to the body of knowledge of the Omani employment profile in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman through an in-depth analysis of documents and statistics from government Ministries, as well as a determination of the factors and constraints confronting the hotel sector, and affecting the implementation of the Omanisation Plan. This research is the first investigation of Omani employment in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing research in Oman on the field of hotel employment in the Omani hotel sector, which is highly requested and encouraged by the Omani government under the umbrella of the Omanisation Plan as a key area of the country’s economic diversification, and the activation of the private sector to attract more employees.

Another important purpose for this research is its contribution to the noticeable shortage of literature on Omani employment in the hotel sector, despite the difficulties of gathering the data about Omani employees in hotels.

7.4.2 Contribution to Practice

This research contributes to practice through different areas. Firstly, it is vitally important to discover the real problem with Omani employment in the hotel sector, and then explore the most influential factors affecting the implementation of the Omanisation Plan, and assist in retaining Omani employees in the hotel sector to address the problem of labour turnover.
Secondly, this study identifies the most influential factors in Omani employment, such as remuneration and security of the private sector compared to the public sector, as well as the cultural and social factors in terms of Omanis attitudes towards the hotel industry, the anti-social hours of hospitality jobs, the reputation of the hotel industry, and the image of the industry. The research also highlights Islamic perspectives, the most dynamic factor in Muslim lives, and how these factors socially construct the choice of a career in hospitality in Omani society. Therefore, the findings of this study, if subsequently implemented through a set of appropriate strategies, will help decision-makers in promoting and enhancing Omani employment in the hotel sector, which will in turn help in the succession of Omanisation Plan.

7.5 Limitations

A few limitations inherent in the present research should be considered. One limitation may include the time constraints of the research which limited the focus to the capital city of Sultanate of Oman, notwithstanding the number of respondents in the representative sample. Although the demographics of the capital are similar to other regions in the country in terms of culture, traditions and other social costumes, the capital area is more modernized compared to other regions. Therefore, peoples' perspectives may be different in some aspects with regards to employment the hotel sector. Consequently, any attempts to generalize the results should take into account the major differences between the capital and other areas as the picture could be more conservative elsewhere.

In addition, the validity of the semi-structured interviews in the case study may be reduced due to the fact that the interview questions were initially transcribed into Arabic
and accordingly answers were then translated into English during transcription. Words can unintentionally acquire the wrong meaning in the translation process. Cultural understanding of the phrases with no direct translation offers particular problems to the researcher, although care was taken to avoid the misinterpretation of the real meaning. The strategy of consulting professionals in translation and allowing the review of translated work has hopefully helped to overcome this problem.

Furthermore, limitations of the data are due to the fact that some of them have been collected mainly from different on-line sources (governmental organizations, ministerial websites, and non-governmental organizations, banks, institutions and country statistics data). Unfortunately, the data was limited and some was not publicly available. One of the difficulties with the document analysis was that it was not possible to analyse everything and all the documents the researcher gets (Bell, 1993). It is also possible that information about hotels especially that which is related to the number of Omani hotel employees may not represent the actual figures.

Another difficulty with data collected from archival records, is that some events and information are not recorded which can be really frustrating. Also sometimes the information the researcher needs may never have been recorded or been filed away (Jones, 1996). Despite taking all possible measures into consideration, in terms of interpreting the collected information, it is possible that some errors may have occurred due to data inaccuracies.

Other limitations with regards the study sample affected the researcher choice of the sample of study. Firstly, the researcher was based in UK and a very limited period of time was spent in Oman to conduct the interviews. Secondly, the researcher was
required to travel from her home town to Muscat the capital for an appointment with the human resource manager first, then to do the interviews, and again to get permission from the managers to do the interviews with hotel employees, which takes lots of time and effort.

Fourthly, with some hotels it was not easy to make appointments or to conduct the interviews at the time planned. They cancelled the appointment on the same day, which prevented the researcher conducting another interview in another hotel.

Another limitation is that the two of the hotels where interviews with human resource managers were conducted were closed for construction work due to the cyclone in June 2007. This made conducting interviews with employees from the same hotels impossible. To overcome this problem, the researcher therefore increased the number of employees from other hotels to facilitate the representation of the sampled employees.

Furthermore, the researcher had planned to conduct a focus group with hospitality students from Omani institutions as essential stakeholders. However, due to time constraints, it was not possible to conduct this study because of conflicts between the students' holidays and the research of the Sultanate.

7.6 Opportunities for Further Research

There are many areas that could be usefully pursued from this study. In reality, the present study is just the beginning and should be considered as an invitation to other researchers to join the investigation into the field of changing the image of hospitality careers, and to help in the success of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector.
Similar studies may be conducted according to newer data about hotel employees and the positions they occupy, according to the increasing or declining number of Omani employees, to verify the implementations of the Omanisation Plan, and to help the country and decision-makers adjust the plan with respect to societal attitudes towards working in hotels in Oman.

Students are important stakeholders in the hotel sector; in terms of future employees of the sector therefore, further research can be conducted to measure their attitudes towards hospitality careers as well as their expectations about the job and the sector.

The research findings showed that social and cultural factors influence women's employment in the hotel sector. However, an in-depth study could be conducted to establish tangible ways to tackle cultural and social issues.

Parental influence is an important aspect on children’s career choices as well as their expectations for their future career. Therefore, a study of the parental influence on career choice and their attitudes towards hospitality careers is essential.

7.7 Personal Thoughts

This thesis is the culmination of a four-year research effort designed to explore the issues underpinning the development and implementation of the Omanisation Plan in the hotel sector. This research allowed the researcher to explore and investigate many of the issues related to employment in the hospitality industry globally and in the Sultanate of Oman specifically. It also allowed the researcher to explore several interesting areas
during the initial stage of searching for an appropriate methodology for this research in term of epistemological stances, and methodological approach in the research.

This research also revealed many issues the researcher was not aware of and certain that no other researchers in the Sultanate have studied such issues in the past. These issues include the social and Islamic constraints related to the hospitality sector for males and females alike.

Through my research experience the researcher have developed the knowledge of critical thinking and strengthened the belief that knowledge has no end, and that everyday we live and every word we read builds on and constructs our knowledge base.

During various stages of this research the researcher learned that the purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live (Adler, 1902:1).
REFERENCES:


Al-Bukhaari (1763) and Muslim (1341) *Hadeeth about woman traveling alone*. Ibn Abbas.


Anas Ibn Malik Hadeeth dealing with liquors: selling and buying. Al-Tirmidhi 2776,


References


References


References


Fraser, J. B. (1836). Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia: From the Earliest Ages to the Present time: with a detailed view of its resources, government, population, natural history, and the character of its inhabitants, particularly of the wandering tribes including a description of Afghanistan and Beloochistan. Iran, Harper & Brothers.


References


References


References


References


References


Rassekh, S. (2004). Education as a Motor for Development: Recent education reforms in Oman with particular reference to the status of women and girls. UNESCO.


References


References


APPENDICES
Appendix 2

Department of Tourism in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)

a) Description and Affiliation

The university is the realisation of the promise announced by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said during the 10th anniversary of Oman’s National Day in 1980. Construction started in 1982 and the first SQU students were enrolled in 1986. In accordance with the Royal Directives of His Majesty, the University commenced with five colleges; namely Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, Education, and Science. The College of Arts was opened in 1987, and a College of Commerce and Economics was opened in 1993 (SQU, 2008).

b) Mission Statement

The Department of Tourism in the College of Art and Social Sciences, aims to produce qualified personnel to work in the various fields of tourism; it will also be a nucleus for academic and professional training in the Sultanate (Abdul-Ghani, 2006), aspiring to become the center of academic and vocational education in the Sultanate, since this type of education is always of great interest in terms of employment, both in government and the private sector locally or globally. It also aims to supply the labour market with the required qualified human resources. This accordingly will aid the university in contributing to the development of human resources in the Sultanate.

c) Degree Offered

The degree offered by the department is the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Tourism. Students are required to take 128 credit hours to fulfill the requirements of the BA
degree. The programme consists of four years or eight consecutive quarters. 40% of the plan in the first four quarters is general subjects. Then in the next four quarters is to allocate precise convergence of 60% of the Plan of specialisation. The specialisation can be in three different areas:

- Tourism Management;
- Hotel Management; and
- Tour Guidance.

Courses range from general education courses to core courses and majors.

- Modern Trends in Tourism
- Tourism Authorities and Organizations
- Tourism and Hospitality Legislation
- Tourism and Ecology
- Tourism Security
- Research Planning in Tourism and Hospitality
- Tourism Companies and Travel Agencies Operations
- Transportation Management
- Aspects of Oman History
- Tourism and Recreation Geography of Oman
- Methods of Tourism Guidance
- Hotel and Restaurant Management
- Feasibility Study of Hospitality and Tourist Projects
- Statistics for Tourism
- Tourism and Hospitality Marketing
- Culture Heritage Management
• Omani Arts
• Management of Conventions and Meetings
• Tourism and Hospitality Human Resources Management
• Graduation Project

The student is required to study different subjects for each specialization, and other subjects for all students in the department as the university prerequisite, college prerequisite, and department prerequisite for Tourism Management and Hotel Management. The student also has to take 6 hours from the department electives, and other 6 hours elective subjects, 3 hours from the college electives and 3 hours from university electives. The department also requires students to choose one of three European languages, such as French, German or Italian.

d) Training and Internship Sites

The practical training is for eight weeks between the sixth and seventh quarter, and for four weeks between the seventh and eighth quarter. The training can be in the country or out the country. In the country is in the public and private sector. In Public Sector the training takes place in Ministry of Tourism, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sultan Qaboos University, and Muscat Festival.

In the private sector the training takes place in five star and four-star hotels, such as the Al Bustan Palace Intercontinental, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Holiday Inn, Crowne Plaza, and Chedi Hotel. It also takes place in Gulf Air, Oman Air, Muscat International Airport, Emirates Airline, and Bahwan Travel Agencies.

International training is also provided to the student which may take place in Copthorne Hotels Cardiff, United Kingdom, Primasol Hotels in Egypt and France.
Appendices

Appendix 3

Oman College Tourism

a) Mission Statement

The students in the College of Tourism enjoy a true tourism and hospitality education where they can develop personally and professionally and grow into future business leaders. The aim is to provide young talented Omani people with the best education in the tourism and hospitality industry, thereby creating job opportunities and building careers.

The college is affiliated to the Austrian International Institute of Tourism and Management (ITM) and the International Management Centre (IMC) University of Applied Sciences, Austria.

b) Qualifications Offered

The college offered two different programmes; ITM Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management, and Vocational Hospitality Certificate (VHC). A Foundation Program (FP) is required for both programmes. The FP includes Basic English language skills, IT skills, English language for hospitality and basic mathematics for accountancy and economics.

1) ITM Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management

The study for the ITM Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management which is accredited according to the regulations by the Austrian Ministry of Science and Culture and by the Oman Ministry of Higher Education. The ITM Diploma prepares students for
mid- to top-management positions. The majority of the courses are management oriented and designed to develop students into future business leaders.

The study is two years plus the FP, the first and second term of the second year the student study general subjects. In the third year, if the student wants to be specialized in Tourism Management or Hospitality Management, the college offered 16 hours to be studied in the third and fourth term.

**ITM Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management Programme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>TERM 1</th>
<th>TERM 2</th>
<th>TERM 3</th>
<th>TERM 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECTS</td>
<td>Hours Per Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Subjects</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Subjects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Subjects</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality Management*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Management</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Specialized Subjects

2) VHC Programme

The second programme provided by the College of Tourism is Vocational Hospitality Certificate (VHC), which aims to prepare the students to become specialists in their
chosen field or maybe to set up their own business in the future. VHC is accredited by the Oman Ministry of Manpower.

With this programme they receive practical training, plus a basic knowledge of tourism relevant theory, e.g. Accounting, IT, Hospitality Administration or Marketing. The duration of the programme is two years in addition to the foundation year.

The majority of the subjects are operationally and practice-oriented in order to prepare students for their future jobs. All students on this programme are required to do an industry placement of 12 weeks in a tourism-associated business plus 4 weeks of training in kitchen or service.

Vocational Hospitality Certificate Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>TERM 1</th>
<th>TERM 2</th>
<th>TERM 3</th>
<th>TERM 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational Subjects</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Subjects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Subjects</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practical training is a very important part of the teaching methods at the College of Tourism, since many jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry are operationally oriented. The training takes place on the grounds of the College in the following subjects:
- Food Production
- Service and Restaurant Management
- Bar and Beverage Management
- Nutrition

Additionally, students are required to undertake a 12 week industry placement in a business associated industry. The College offered and carefully selected the placements for the students, or the students may apply for positions on their own. The College Human Resources Department is supporting graduates in finding a job in some occasions.

c) Opportunities for Further Studies

ITM graduates can continue their studies abroad at one of the following universities, where all credit points will be transferred for ITM Diploma holders.

- IMC University of Applied Sciences, Krems, Austria
- University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, UK
- Florida International University, USA
- Euro Course (HMSL), Netherlands
- Hawaii Pacific University, Hawaii, USA

Appendix 4

National Hospitality Institute (NHI)

b) Mission Statement

To be the regions undisputed leader in Hospitality Training by inspiring every customer and changing lives within a professional and caring environment.
Appendices

c) Partners

- BTEC London Edexcel Foundation
- The Hospitality Awarding Body, UK (HAB)
- International Air Transport Association, Switzerland (IATA)
- Investor in People
- Bureau Veritas Quality International, U.K. (BVQI)
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, UK
- Headhunt–Middle East
- Swiss Education Group
- Renaissance Education and Training Group
- Ministry of Manpower

Appendix 7

Questions for Government Officials

- What is your position?
- How long have you been working in this department
- What is the extent of the implementation of Omanisation Plan in the country?
- What is the extent of the Omanisation Plan in the tourism and hotel sector?
- Is there a high demand for Omanis to work in the hotel sector?
- What is the most issue you think that restrain Omanis from working in hotels?
- Is there any co-operation between you and the industry?
- From your point of view, do you think that Omanis want to work in hotels? If no what do you think the reasons behind that?
Do you receive any complains from Omani employees working in hotels? If yes what kind of complaints?

What kind of jobs do you think that young Omanis like to do?

Do they prefer working in the Public or Private sector and why?

Is there any regulation regarding the pay of the Omani employees in the hotel sector?

Questions for Hotel Employers

- How long has your hotel been in operation?
- Please indicate the number of staff in each employment category (full-time, part-time, seasonal staff) in your hotel.
- What is the gender profile of staff in your hotel (number of males and females)?
- Do you employ college graduates? And are they from the institutions Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), National Hospitality Institution (NHI), or College of Tourism?
- Do you employ overseas staff? And in which jobs?
- Why do you recruit expatriates in these jobs and not Omanis?
- Do you provide your staff with any training? What kind of training?
- Do you have any in house training? And you have training class rooms in the hotel?
- What are the main human resource problems your hotel face?
- How do you see the Omani employees at work? Are they well qualified or not? If not what do you think the reasons?
- What kind of qualifications do they have?
- What is the method you use to recruit your Omani employees?
- Do you have a high turnover amongst Omani employees? If yes why?
- What is the minimum pay for the Omani employees? And how much do you pay the Omani graduates?
Do you face any problems with Omani female employees?

Questions for Hotel Employees

- How long have you been working in this hotel?
- What is your qualification?
- Are you single or married?
- Did you work anywhere else or in other hotels before?
- What is your job in the hotel?
- How did you choose to work in hotel?
- Did you work in another department in the hotel?
- Do you like your job? If not what are the reasons? And what do you think of your job?
- Do your family like your job in the hotel?
- Do you get any training in the hotel during the period of your work?
- What kind of training do you get? And where?
- Do you have the intention to continue working in hotel? If no why?
- Do you face any problems in the hotel from your employers or any discrimination between you and the expatriates?
- How much do you get monthly? And do you think it is reasonable?
- Do you work at nights? And what do you think of night shifts?
- Do you work during Ramadhan, Eid or any National holidays?

For female employees

- Did you choose to work in the hotel?
- Do you work at nights? And till what time?
- Does it conflict with your family commitments?
- Do your family like your job?
- Do you face any kind of problems during your job?
- If yes what kind of problems?
## Appendix 5

### Hotel incomes, Number of guest, and night they spent by regions during the first quarter of year 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Beverages</th>
<th>Calls</th>
<th>Laundry</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number of Guests</th>
<th>Number of Nights</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Wages and Salaries</th>
<th>Percent of jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>23,177,234</td>
<td>15,725,565</td>
<td>2,336,129</td>
<td>1,225,970</td>
<td>431,427</td>
<td>1,573,125</td>
<td>40,023,089</td>
<td>56,771</td>
<td>137,319,966</td>
<td>162,975,770</td>
<td>31,045,182</td>
<td>13,349,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Batinah</td>
<td>1,394,107</td>
<td>712,753</td>
<td>392,150</td>
<td>1,179,324</td>
<td>2,274,766</td>
<td>1,490,146</td>
<td>4,464,475</td>
<td>3,706</td>
<td>22,590</td>
<td>6,352</td>
<td>53,944</td>
<td>25,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ahsa</td>
<td>477,075</td>
<td>226,897</td>
<td>135,621</td>
<td>8,397</td>
<td>47,034</td>
<td>90,656</td>
<td>203,545</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5,785</td>
<td>3,375</td>
<td>30,940</td>
<td>15,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'd Dhibah</td>
<td>52,341</td>
<td>6,396</td>
<td>67,594</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>12,794</td>
<td>14,084</td>
<td>91,590</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>5,457</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash-Sharq</td>
<td>451,041</td>
<td>337,372</td>
<td>125,330</td>
<td>1,374</td>
<td>10,276</td>
<td>24,421</td>
<td>59,058</td>
<td>9,285</td>
<td>20,912</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>20,912</td>
<td>3,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ammariha</td>
<td>451,041</td>
<td>337,372</td>
<td>125,330</td>
<td>1,374</td>
<td>10,276</td>
<td>24,421</td>
<td>59,058</td>
<td>9,285</td>
<td>20,912</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>20,912</td>
<td>3,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Subhanah</td>
<td>451,041</td>
<td>337,372</td>
<td>125,330</td>
<td>1,374</td>
<td>10,276</td>
<td>24,421</td>
<td>59,058</td>
<td>9,285</td>
<td>20,912</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>20,912</td>
<td>3,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Waraq</td>
<td>14,062</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14,120</td>
<td>14,120</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>2,227</td>
<td>1,773</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukhdar</td>
<td>1,161,995</td>
<td>732,372</td>
<td>377,221</td>
<td>15,663</td>
<td>62,234</td>
<td>29,344</td>
<td>462,856</td>
<td>9,563</td>
<td>21,574</td>
<td>6,372</td>
<td>41,614</td>
<td>4,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Batinah</td>
<td>1,161,995</td>
<td>732,372</td>
<td>377,221</td>
<td>15,663</td>
<td>62,234</td>
<td>29,344</td>
<td>462,856</td>
<td>9,563</td>
<td>21,574</td>
<td>6,372</td>
<td>41,614</td>
<td>4,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,025,923</td>
<td>17,525,946</td>
<td>9,777,851</td>
<td>1,292,704</td>
<td>425,578</td>
<td>2,804,629</td>
<td>40,023,089</td>
<td>56,771</td>
<td>137,319,966</td>
<td>162,975,770</td>
<td>31,045,182</td>
<td>13,349,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 6

**Hotel incomes, Number of guest, and night they spent by classification during the first quarter of year 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Beverages</th>
<th>Calls</th>
<th>Laundry</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number of guests</th>
<th>Number of nights</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Wages and salaries</th>
<th>Pct% of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Star</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>279,567</td>
<td>269,517</td>
<td>60,356</td>
<td>29,283</td>
<td>256,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>269,517</td>
<td>269,517</td>
<td>60,356</td>
<td>29,283</td>
<td>256,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Star</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Star</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,167</td>
<td>13,167</td>
<td>3,593</td>
<td>3,593</td>
<td>3,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,167</td>
<td>13,167</td>
<td>3,593</td>
<td>3,593</td>
<td>3,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Star</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,950</td>
<td>25,950</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>6,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,950</td>
<td>25,950</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>6,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Star</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33,023</td>
<td>33,023</td>
<td>5,972</td>
<td>5,972</td>
<td>5,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33,023</td>
<td>33,023</td>
<td>5,972</td>
<td>5,972</td>
<td>5,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lux</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24,135</td>
<td>24,135</td>
<td>3,729</td>
<td>3,729</td>
<td>3,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24,135</td>
<td>24,135</td>
<td>3,729</td>
<td>3,729</td>
<td>3,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,945</td>
<td>1,945</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,945</td>
<td>1,945</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>177,772</td>
<td>177,772</td>
<td>45,239</td>
<td>45,239</td>
<td>45,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>177,772</td>
<td>177,772</td>
<td>45,239</td>
<td>45,239</td>
<td>45,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
<td>48,540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table provides data for hotel incomes, number of guests, and nights spent, categorized by classification (1 Star, 2 Star, 3 Star, 4 Star, 5 Star, Lux, Rural area, Unclassified) for the first quarter of the year 2008. The data includes income from various sources such as room, food, beverages, calls, and laundry, and the number of employees and wages and salaries. The percentage of each category is also provided.