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THE QUALITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AMONG EDUCATIONAL MANAGERS IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the quality of training programmes and leadership competencies among educational managers in the Ministry of Education (MoE), Sultanate of Oman. The study examined two objectives which included; (a) to determine the leadership competencies acquired through training among educational managers in MoE, Sultanate of Oman, and (b) to investigate significant differences between leadership competencies among educational managers' at the MoE Head Quarter and Regional Directorate in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman. A sample of two hundred and ninety eight (298) educational managers in the MoE in the Sultanate of Oman participated in the study. A quantitative approach to research using the Alaraimy Competency Survey as the instrument of data collection was used to conduct the study. The data was analysed using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and MANOVA analyses. The results of the study highlighted that the educational managers possessed all leadership competences, though at different levels. It was also revealed that there were no significant differences in the competence levels between educational managers working at the Headquarter of MoE and those in the Regional General Directorates. It is recommended that the MoE, Sultanate of Oman adopts the best training approaches that develop all the competences of educational managers in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman, both at the MoE Head Quarters and Regional General Directorates.

Keywords: *Quality, Training Programmes, Leadership Competencies, Educational Managers, Sultanate of Oman.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Training is a prime, extremely important and powerful tool for changing human resource (Alam, *et al*., 2010). Training is helpful in improving leadership competencies among managers to improve their performance in their organizations (Burgoyne, Hirsh & Williams, 2004; Chigozie, Abel, Chinwendu, Patrick, & Onwe, 2012). In the Sultanate of Oman today training human resource in the various departments and government ministries is one of the main agenda of the country. Due to globalisation, training is required in order to prepare employees to cope with the tumults of globalisation. The Sultanate of Oman in the recent decades has embarked on massive training of its people which has led the illiteracy levels drop to 29% of its population (Rassekh, 2004).

The importance of training in recent decades has increased and the Arab world has increases its budgets on training in both the public and the private sector (Hertog, 2013; AL-Naqbi, 2012). In the Sultanate of Oman training has received great impetus because of the rapid development and change in human resource. As well, the Sultanate of Oman has a strong focus on preparing a strong national cadre in line with the requirements of its development through training (Ministry of Information, 2010).

Training means to coach or instruct guidelines for other people (Al-Wageez, 1990). Training is the process of developing human knowledge, skills, and behaviour purposely intended to do specific tasks by using a learning programme (Kathryn & Eve, 2006). Training is a planned process that is used to develop human capital in terms of knowledge and skills to be able to undertake specific work responsibilities (Armstrong, 1999). Also, training refers to teaching and learning activities that are aimed at developing skills, attitude, knowledge, behaviour and the competency of individuals to achieve a desired change (Musolo *et al*., 2012). Training is offered to support the workforce to achieve different training needs. It involves a series of steps or processes that are present within an institution that intend to shift individuals from their current ranks to higher ranks, and also to enable them to do their work in an appropriate and suitable way (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2008). Training is also defined as a

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programme that provides opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge and their practice (Ibn-Manthoor, 1990). Al-Lawatia (2005) defined training as a set of information activities and planned and structured experiences adopted by the main training. The main aim of training is to impart knowledge and skills to employee to make them ably to do their tasks and give them responsibility in their current and future jobs (Hanngan, 2002; Cole, 1997). An effective training process consists of the following steps; *(a)* a needs analysis involving organizational, personal and task analysis, *(b)* ensuring employee readiness for the training approaches, *(c)* creating a learning environment, *(d)* ensuring transfer of training, *(e)* developing an evaluation plan, *(f)* training methods and *(g)* monitoring and evaluating the programme (Noe, 2010; Prioritysky, 2007; Al-Alawi, 2003; Buckley & Caple, 2007; Noe, 2010; Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2007; Tzine *et al.*, 2007; Brinkerhoff, Hluchyi & Nowakowski, 1986; Jaaffar, 1990).

Training programme are defined as the knowledge input and activities that are organized and planned in form of practical experiences that provide trainees with skills, abilities and proficiencies (Al-Kharusi, 1998). Training programmes consist of content, trainer, coordinators and facilities needed for implementation (Al-Alawi, 2003). In order to get the maximum benefit from a training programme it is necessary to set the training objectives with emphasis on the most important ones (Buckely & Caple, 2007). In selecting the objectives for a training programme, the set objectives should have obvious connections to the competencies required, be clear, and cover all the expected changes (Al-Alawi, 2003; Al-Kharusi, 1998). Setting the training objectives before undertaking the training is important because it helps the trainers to lay guidelines of what they wants from the training undertaken. The quality of training programmes is referred fit for purpose or the Return on Investment got from the training programmes to which the government of Oman spends a lot of money. Training Programmes Characteristics are a unique composition of several components in the training programmes. They include the extent of customization, training programme related to the job, whether it is job specific or job related, and the type of training (Jeeyon, 2005; Moriss, 2009).

Educational Managers are high-ranking personnel working at different professional levels in the Ministry of Education. The people in the group of educational managers in the Ministry of Education usually hold one of these job titles; Head of Department, Deputy Director, Head of Directorate, Deputy Director General, and Director General. Competencies of Educational managers are those which can be used to describe the attributes of high performing leaders needed to produce results in the organization. The leadership competencies might include; *(a) Leading Change Competency* involves the ability to cause strategic change in both inside and outside the organization to meet the organizational goals (Tubbs & Tubbs, 2006). This includes creating transformational change, developing an organizational culture, building support mechanisms, managing the change process, developing change agents, and encouraging individuals as well as structural change in the organization. *(b) Building Coalitions Competency* involves effective communication through oral and written communication competency, effective interviewing, effective negotiation, rumour control, techno-etiquette, and presentation skills (Tubbs & Tubbs, 2006). *(c) Business Acumen Competency* involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically. This can be achieved through preparing and justifying effective budget, assessing current and future human resources required for an organization. *(d) Leading People Competency* involves the ability to lead people towards meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. This competency includes the ability to manage and resolve disagreement among the employees, provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts, and *(e) Results Driven Competency* which involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. This competency includes the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems and calculating risks (Wang, 2006).

The rapid growth in the economy, education and social services in many Arab Gulf states is due to the continuous demand for qualified manpower and trained. In the Sultanate of Oman in 1975 and 1980, two civil service laws were issued that made training an occupational obligation (Jaaffar, 1990). The laws emphasize the role of individual government units to act in a way that secures adequate standards of performance at all levels because training is considered as one of the ways to improve management tasks. In Oman each ministry has its own training budget from which the training budget is drawn (Rajasekar, & Khan, 2013). There are three types of training used in ministries in Oman; *(a)* Training in the ministries, which is technical in nature, *(b)* Sponsored training locally or abroad, and *(c)* at the central administrative training Institute of Public Administration (Jaaffar, 1990). As per the training plan, the policy makers in Oman have tied the education and vocational training system to the pressing needs and demands for qualified manpower within the context of human resources development standards which every government employee should meet (Rajasekar, & Khan, 2013).

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Customisation or branding training programmes is one of the essential characteristics of any training programme. Customisation of training programmes is in three levels; *(a)* standard training programmes, which are also called generic training programmes, *(b)* the middle level of training programme customization, also called a customized training programme, and *(c)* the third type is a tailored training programme that is designed for the specific objectives of training. The customisation is described in three categories which *(a)* adoption of training programmes and content for the trainee level, *(b)* using training aids adapted for company context, *(c)* and aligning with the organization's culture (Jeeyon, 2005). Training is categorised into either job-specific or job-related training. Job related programmes directly reflect the responsibilities of the trainees, the duties they undertake, and their performance improvement characteristics after the training programme while job- specific is more related to the employees (West Virginia University, 2000). Jacobs (2007) as cited in Wen & Huang (2009) categorized the job related training into formal or informal types of training. Interaction between these two main categories produces four sub categories of training approach; *(a)* Formal planning training includes class room training, web-based training, and corporate university, *(b)* Formal unplanned training includes self-directed learning, tuition assistance and adult education, *(c)* Informal planned training which consists of structured on the job training (OJT), coaching, mentoring, and action learning, *(d)* and Informal unplanned training exemplified by the kind of training (unstructured on the job training, casual coaching, adhoc mentoring, job shadowing and learning while doing).

The most common approach of the informal planned approach is on the job training. *On the Job Training (OJT)* needs a smaller budget when compared to classroom training because the trainer will be either the manager or a colleague, so there will be no need for investment in the trainer. *Off the Job Training* means that employee training is conducted at site that is away from the actual work environment (Riley, 2012). An employee can take a day off or time off from the work to attend a college or training centre. They can also attend block release courses, evening classes or distance learning. The courses could be sponsored by the agency or by a higher education authority or be self-sponsored. The aim of this approach is to teach knowledge through different methods, such as; lecture demonstration, role model, questions and answers, case studies, role play, simulation or any other form of training (Raman, 2009).

Competences are the acquired skills that allow employees to work and behave effectively and efficiently in the work context. These competencies include knowledge, abilities, skills, and are blended in a complex way (Al-dreij, 2000). The characteristics of competencies include the following; *(a)* there is specific content of competency, *(b)* it is built upon knowledge and analytical skills, *(c)* competencies and values are inevitably interdependent, *(d)* competency involve all parts of humankind *(e)* competency is related to staff duties, and *(f)* competency can be developed through learning, experience and training. The competencies are derived into four clusters; *(a)* technical competencies, (b business competencies, *(c)* interpersonal competencies and *(d)* intellectual competencies (McLagan, 1983, 1989; McLagan & Suhadolnik, 1989; Valkeavaara, 1998 as cited in Yonghak, 2006). Yonghak (2006) According to McLagan (1996) as cited in Wang (2006), there are many advantages in applying a competency model in working environment which include; *(a)* determining the basic characteristics of good performance, *(b)* preparing lists of the main competency for each specific job level and the duties for each job title, *(c)* helping in the extension of human capital through support, as practitioners improve the training, and *(d)* and helping in determining the gap of staff performance and filling it with the right training and experience. In adopting the process of applying a competency model, there are three methods that can be used; *(a)* adopting a ready model, *(b)* adopting a tailored model, and *(c)* a tailored model (Wang, 2006).

Oman attaches great importance to manpower and emphasizes the interest year after year by increasing the annual budget for human development. The state has also a clear strategy for the development of manpower to raise their efficiency and enhance their role in the development process. The vision of developing human resource through training is clearly captured in the Omanisation jobs plan for the years (1989 – 1994 Development Plan) training plan, in the modified system to evaluate the performance of government officials and in the modified system for civil service promotions. Recently the international trends in human resource training and development have been taken to be a key aspect in improving human resource so to be efficient and effective (Bach, 2000). The Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman has adjusted to upgrade the training department into a Directorate of Training and General Directorate of Human Resources Development so as to meet the current training needs of it employees. In the same direction the Ministry has increased the budget it allocates to the Directorate General of Human Resources and its training programmes. But despite the increase of resources there seems to be a discrepancy noted in the output. In addition, the improvement in the size of the Directorate is not paralleled with any improvement in the technical performance of staff in the Ministry of Education. The Directorate-General of Human Resources Development (DGHRD) in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman trains and develop employee in the MoE through its five Departments; the Department of School

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Performance Development, the Department of Training and Qualification, the Department of Educational Supervision, the Department of Evaluating Training Impact and the Main Training Center (Al-Rawas, 2011). The training in the MoE is divided into two categories; (a) *Internal training* in which training is done by the trainers in the MoE training centers, and (b) *Training abroad* whereby scholarships are given to trainees to attend courses outside the Sultanate of Oman. This helps educational managers who are taking these courses to get new experiences or to study the most up to date technology in their fields.

The MoE provides effective training employees in the MoE of the Sultanate of Oman but on the centrally the administrative staff have been found lacking in some of the skills they have undergone training (Al-Qasimi, 2004; Al-Kaabi, 2002). This has been attributed to the needs analysis conducted (Sangoor, 1997; Shayban, 1993; AL-Qasimi, 2004), the selection of the training programmes, inadequacy in catering for the essential needs of the educational managers (Al-Mashekee, 2009). This deficiency has been brought about the repetition of some training programmes for the educational managers in the Ministry while also the planning phase of training programmes is mostly done in isolation from the design and implementation of training programme. Although several studies have been done on training needs analysis and on the development of training programmes in general (Shayban, 1993; Al-Alawi, 2003; AL-Qasimi, 2004), little or no scholastic attention has been given to the quality of training progrmmes and competencies among educational managers in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman. The purpose of this study was to examine the quality training programmes and leadership competencies among educational managers of the MoE in the Sultanate of Oman.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study objectives are as follows;

1. To examine the leadership competencies acquired through training by educational managers in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman.
2. To examine if there are significant differences between educational managers' leadership competencies in MoE Head Quarters (HQ) and Regional General Directorates (RGD) in the Sultanate of Oman.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative approach to research to achieve the study objectives. The study also employed a cross-sectional survey design in collecting data for the study. The data for the study was collected using a questionnaire (Alaraimy Competency Survey).

3.2 Population and Sample

From a population of 732 educational managers in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman sample of 298 participants was randomly selected basing the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970). The sample was selected from the population at both the MoE Head Quarters and the 11 Regional General Directorates (Muscat, Dhofar, Al-Dakhliyah, Al-Dhahirah, Al-Buraimi, Al-Sharqiyah North, Al-Sharqiyah South, Al-Batinah South, Al-Batinah-North, Al-Wasta and Musandam).

3.3 Instrument of Data Collection

To develop the questionnaire for this study a set of three questionnaires were adopted and adapted from the existing literature. Most of the questions were adopted from the Leadership Competency Survey Questionnaires which was prepared by OPM in 1998 and used by Wang (2006). Other questions were adopted from Investigation and Critique of Competency for Human Resource Development (Yonghak's (2006), and from the questionnaire used to measure competencies of project managers in Hong Kong (Kwok Chor-Wo, 2004). The newly developed questionnaire used in this study was named "Alaraimy Competency Survey" (ACS). The ACS questionnaire was divided into two sections; section I and II. Section I comprises the demographic items (name, job, sex, directorate, academic qualifications, years of experience, the date of joining the job, training programmes and courses, the type of training received by the person in his job, and training obtained), while section II represents the ACS items of competency. Section II of the ACS consists of 32 items which explain employees' competencies. In the ACS, the items which comprise the LCC range from item 1 to item 8 whereas BCC items are from item 9 to item 15. The LPC items are from item 16 to item 21. Items of BAC are from item 22 to item 26 while the RDC items range from item 27 to item 32. The items in the ACS Section II were rated on a 7 point likert scale; 7 = very high, 6 = high, 5 = above average, 4 = average, 3 = below average, 2 = low and1 = very low.

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Table 1: Demographic items and ACS competencies

	ITEMS			
DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS	Name Sex Job Directorate Academic Qualifications Years of Experience The Date of Joining The Job Training Programmes and Courses The Type Of Training			
DOMAINS	**ACS**	**OPM**	**OPM**	ACS
Leading change competency (LCC)	Eight	Eight	0.813	0.941
Business acumen competency (BAC)	Seven	Six	0.813	0.977
Leading people competency (LPC)	Six	Four	0.716	0.970
Building coalitions competency (BCC)	Five	Three	0.570	0.920
Results driven competency (RDC)	Six	Six	0.709	0.950
OVERALL RELIABILITY			0.925	0.990
TOTAL: FIVE	32	27		

3.4 Validity and Reliability

According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) an instrument can be considered valid if it measures what it is proposed to measure. The ACS questionnaire was tested for both face and content validity. To establish the content validity of the ACS questionnaire it was given to experts in the area of training and Development at Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in Oman for validation. Face validity to the instrument was done by the trainers at the different training centres in the training centres in MoE, Sultanate of Oman. For reliability, a pilot study was conducted on the instrument on a sample for the study in order to find out its fitness for collecting data. Reliability was conducted on the whole instrument and on individual constructs and the instrument was proved to be reliable (see table 2). From the obtained results of both validity and reliability it was concluded that the questionnaire was both valid and reliable.

Table2: Reliability Statistics of constructs

Subjective Norms	**Constructs**	**No of items**	Cronbach's Alpha
1	LCC	8	.941
2	BCC	7	.977
3	LPC	6	.97
4	BAC	5	.92
5	RDC	6	.95
	OVERALL	**32**	.990

N=27

3.5 Data Analysis

Predictive analytics software for Windows (PASW) - 20 and AMOS graphics were used to analyse the data for this research in order to find out the competencies possessed by the educational managers and to test the fit of the educational manager competency model through CFA. Also, from the quantitative data the differences in the educational managers' competencies at the Ministry of Education Head Quarters and regional directorates in the Sultanate of Oman were revealed. After the data was collected it was assessed for missing scores, outliers, data entry error, and preliminary assumptions (i.e., normality, linearity, homogeneity, multicolinearity, etc.). Cases with missing data were deleted for those participants who did not provide a complete response to the questionnaire. For the test of preliminary assumptions (normality, linearity, outliers, homogeneity, multi-colinearity and singularity), normality was checked on using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test showed that the data was normally distributed. The skewness and kurtosis of all the continuous variables were analyzed and the variables were within an adequate range of -1 to +1. Using a scatter plot it was observed that the data has met the assumption of linearity which showed a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables under study.

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At the same time, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to analyse the differences between educational managers' competencies at the MoE HQ and RGDs. In analyzing data for the study using CFA the AMOS statistical tool, version 18.0, was employed in the analysis to estimate the dimensions of educational managers' competency. They included the Chi-square (χ^2) statistics; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); Comparative Fit Index (CFI); Normed Chi-square (χ^2/df); and statistical power (*p*-value).

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

To examine if all five leadership competencies possessed by educational managers in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman, the study assessed the effectiveness and adequacy of CFA analyses conducted with various fit indices. These included the Chi-square (χ^2) statistics; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); Comparative Fit Index (CFI); Normed Chi-square (χ^2/df); and statistical power (*p*-value). These indices are discussed briefly as follows.

Chi-square Statistics (χ^2): In assessing the model fit, a non-significant difference between the two matrices was sought to support decisions about the fit of the model to the data (Hair et al., 2010). The χ^2 statistics were used because they yield significant value because of their sensitivity to sample size and model complexity (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005; Hair et al. 2010). Selected fit indices like the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were also used because of the independence of sample size (Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008; Hair et al., 2010). The ***Comparative Fit Index (CFI)*** was used to compare the sample covariance matrix with the null or baseline model because its ability to perform creditably well regardless of the sample size (Kline, 2005; Byrne, 1998; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). ***Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)*** is a fit index that measures the error of approximation. Error of approximation is concerned to the lack of fit of the model to the population covariance matrix (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 1998).

In assessing the psychometric properties of the educational managers' competencies, two statistical methods were applied in this study. These were Cronbach alpha reliability test and a confirmatory factor analytic (CFA) test. The Cronbach's alpha statistical method was used to determine the reliability estimates of both the group and the separate dimensions of competency levels that make up the instrument. Following the evidence of good validity estimates for each dimension of the educational managers' competencies, an attempt was made to further examine how well the five dimensions were related to one another (convergent validity), and whether each of them was distinctively different from the others (discriminant validity). Brown (2006) argued that CFA results can provide convincing evidence about the convergent and discriminant validity of theoretical constructs. To achieve this goal, the CFA model specified for the five sub-dimensions of educational managers' competency was applied, using the remaining 29 items. The results, as shown in Figure 1 and Table 3, reveal that the model shows a modest fit to the sample data of this study.

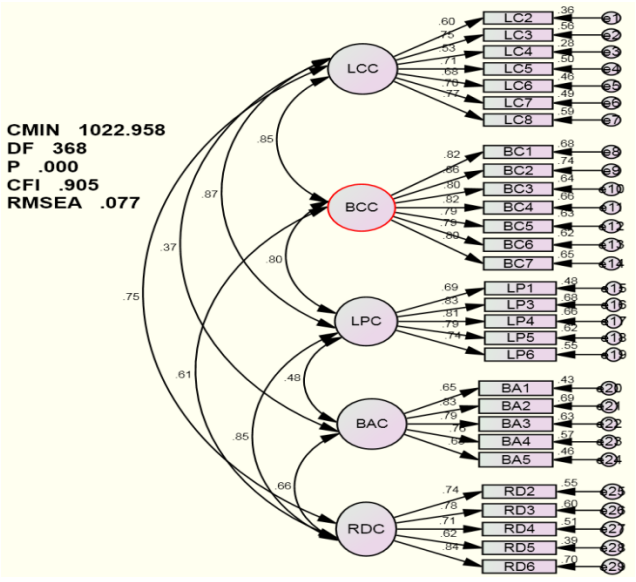

Figure 1: First Order CFA Model for Educational Managers' Competencies

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Above all, all the parameter loadings and correlation estimates were statistically significant as in Table 3 below illustrates the standardized estimates for the main model

The summary of outputs with Cronbach's alpha statistics for each construct and CFA fit indices are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha and CFA Fit Statistics for the Main Model

Dimensions	**Items**	**SFL**	∝
Leading change competency (LCC)			0.89
	Eternal awareness	0.6	
	Creativity and Innovation	0.75	
	Strategic Thinking	0.53	
	Continual Learning	0.71	
	Resilience	0.68	
	Flexibility	0.7	
Building Coalition competency (BCC)			0.93
	A.Oral Communication	0.82	
	B.Oral Communication	0.86	
	Written Communication	0.80	
	Influencing / Negotiating	0.81	
	Networking and Partnering	0.79	
	Political Savvy	0.78	
	Interpersonal skills	0.80	
Leading People Competency (LPC)			0.91
	Conflict management	0.70	
	Leveraging Diversity	0.79	
	Integrity / Honesty	0.80	
	Improving human Performance	0.80	
	Managing Organizational Knowledge	0.73	
Business Acumen Competency (BAC)			0.86
	Financial Management	0.65	
	Human Resource Management	0.82	
	Reengineering business processes	0.79	
	Interrelatedness the decisions and the profitability of the company	0.76	
	Technology Management	0.69	
Result Driven Competency (RDC)			0.88
	Planning and Implementing Assignments	0.70	
	Accountability	0.77	
	Problem Solving	0.78	
	Decisiveness	0.69	
	Customer Service	0.63	
CFA Fit Statistics: CMINDF = 1022.958 P = .000 CFI =.905 RMSEA = .077			
OVERALL Cronbach's Alpha = 0.97			

NB: SFL = Standardized Factor Loading; ∝ = Cronbach's alpha; CMINDF = Normed Chi-Squared (χ^2/df); P = Power Statistics; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

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In determining the adequacy of the measurement model of educational managers' competencies, the adopted cut-off values for fit statistics were taken into consideration. Based on these criteria, the χ^2/df (2.76), CFI (.905), and RMSEA (.077) values in particular fell within the threshold range and were considered very adequate in the literature, and therefore the tested measurement model was judged adequately fit to the sample data. The parameter loadings for each construct moreover were reasonably adequate and appropriate (mostly 7 and above), which is evidence that the specified indicators converged well on their respective latent constructs. The model also lacked -loading(s) and error covariance(s) among constructs indicated which shows evidence of discriminant validity. It was also evident in the output that despite the uniqueness of each latent construct, they still had some shared elements which was indicated by the inter-correlation values among constructs which were moderately adequate (mostly 2 and above).

To examine if there are significant differences between educational managers' at MoE HQ and RGD with regard to the possession of leadership competencies in the MoE, Sultanate of Oman, the one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to find whether the group of educational managers differed in terms of competencies. Before conducting the analysis, the assumption checks were tested.

Normality: According to the histogram generated from the data it was not in a perfect normal distribution (see Figure 2). However, MANOVA is robust to normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

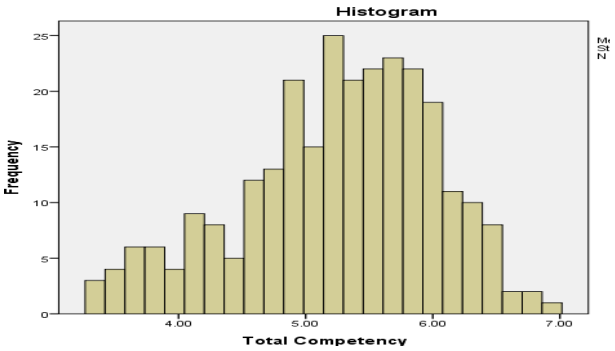

Figure 2: The normality distribution for the sample

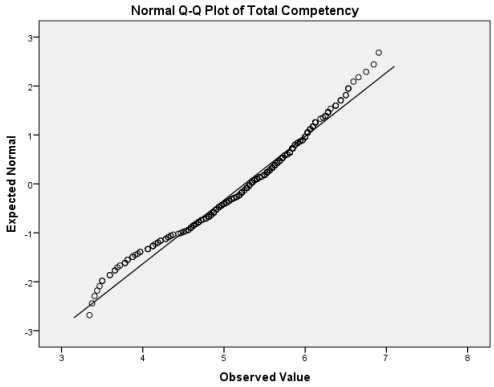

Figure 3: The normal Q-Q plot for the research sample

According to the Q-Q plot, the point fairly estimated the diagonal line moving from the left to the right. This indicated that although the data was not perfectly normal, it fairly estimated the normal line as seen in the normal Q-Q plot (see Figure 3).

Outliers*:* Before the outliers were removed the Mahalanobis distance was in between 0.187 and 19.201. According to the residual statistics table, after removing the outliers, Mahanobis distance was between 0.386 and 2.569 which indicated that there were no threats of outliers in the data. Also, after removing the outliers, the boxplot confirmed that there were no outliers in the data (see Figure 4),

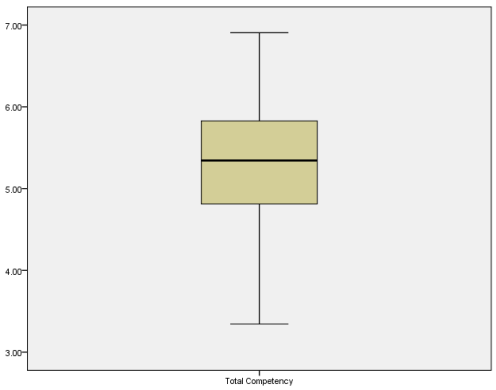

Table 4: Boxplot for the Total Competency

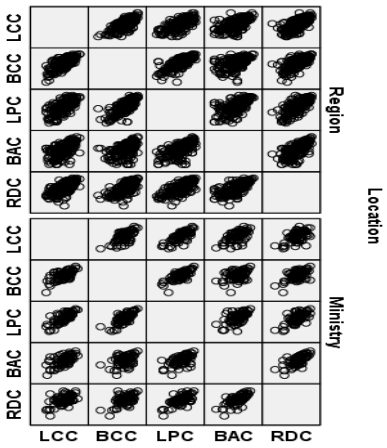

Figure 5: The Relationship between the Five-Domain Competency (RDC, BAC, LPC, BCC and LCC) and location (Region and Ministry)

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Linearity: According to the relationship of plots in figure 5, linearity showed the relation in each pair of dependent variables. In a matrix of each pair of variables in the separate groups (MoE HQ and Regions), the plots did not show any obvious evidence of non-linearity; therefore the assumption of linearity was met.

Variances-Covariance: Box's M tests are observed that the covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups as in Table 4.

Table 4: Box's M Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices[a]

Box's M	F	df1	df2	Sig.
32.071	2.082	15	84997.590	.008

a. Design: Intercept + vocation P <0.05.

Multicollinearity: According to the inter-relationships between the independent variables, there was no relationship which exceeded 0.80 to indicate high relation, or below 0.40 to indicate a low relationship. This means that all the variables were moderated, indicating that there was no threat of multicolinearity in the data.

Homogeneity of Covariance and Variance: MANOVA was used to check on whether workplace difference had an influence on the Competencies of Educational managers at the Head Quarter and in Regional General Directorates, MoE, and Sultanate of Oman. Using Levene's test of equality of error variances all the dependent variables were insignificant ($p > .05$). This means that the two groups which were compared were homogeneous across value as in Table 5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 5: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Dimensions	F	*df1*	*df2*	Sig
LCC	.002	1	270	.962
BCC	1.272	1	270	.260
LPC	1.856	1	270	.174
BAC	5.206	1	270	.023
RDC	3.756	1	270	.054

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups
Design: Intercept + Location

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance was undertaken to understand how the different dependent variables differed on the independence of this variable (Gall et al., 1996). The results revealed that in the multivariate tests (Tables 8 & 9) conducted for the study there was no significant difference in the educational managers' competencies in relation to their workplaces (Pillai Trace = .012, F (5, 266) = .658, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .012$; Wilks' $\lambda = .988$, F (5, 266) = .658, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .012$;; Hotelling's Trace = .012, F (5, 266) = .853, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .012$;; Roy's Largest Root = .012, F (5, 266) = .853, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = . . 012$;). It was also revealed that the effect of workplace and interaction between the different groups of competencies was not different among the educational managers workplace. The p value (0.68) was greater than 0.05. Also, from the results of the partial eta squared value generated for all the dependent variable were small (1.2%) and were of not importance in highlighting the differences.

Table 8: Multivariate Tests

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.976	2145.141[b]	5.000	266.000	.000	.976	10725.703	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.024	2145.141[b]	5.000	266.000	.000	.976	10725.703	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	40.322	2145.141[b]	5.000	266.000	.000	.976	10725.703	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	40.322	2145.141[b]	5.000	266.000	.000	.976	10725.703	1.000
Location	Pillai's Trace	.012	.658[b]	5.000	266.000	.655	.012	3.292	.238
	Wilks' Lambda	.988	.658[b]	5.000	266.000	.655	.012	3.292	.238
	Hotelling's Trace	.012	.658[b]	5.000	266.000	.655	.012	3.292	.238
	Roy's Largest Root	.012	.658[b]	5.000	266.000	.655	.012	3.292	.238

a. Design: Intercept + Location
b. Exact statistic
c. Computed using alpha = .05

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Table 9: MANOVA Tests of Between-Subjects Effect

Variable(s)	DV	*F*	*df*	MnSq	Sig	η^2	
Vocation	LCC	.083	1	.109	.773	.000	.
	BCC	.048	1	.067	.826	.000	
	LPC	.808	1	1.131	.370	.003	
	BAC	1.446	1	2.073	.230	.005	
	RDC	.092	1	.133	.762	.000	

Significant at **p*<.05, DV = Dependent Variable, η^2 = Partial Eta Squared, MnSq = Mean Square,

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This is an expected result because most of the educational manager who are working at the MoE HQ, were originally working at RGDs. They May have been nominated to work at the MoE HQ because they had demonstrated their effectiveness in other area. All educational managers, regardless of their place of work, attend the same training programmes. Due to that they also went through the same educational and training experiences. The training programmes and training goals for the general managers, directors of departments and Heads of Sections during the years from 2011 to 2013 were the same (MoE, 2012). If there was no statistically significant difference in relation to each of the dependent variables the research does not need further analysis (Pallant, 2007). The results of the overall multivariate test showed that *p* value (0.68) was greater than 0.05, proving that there was no statistically significant difference in competencies among the educational managers who were working at the MoE HQ and those working in RGDs.

The comparison between the competencies of the educational managers' in the MoE HQ ND RGDs the *p* value (0.68) was greater than 0.05 indicating that there were differences in the five domains of competencies among the educational managers. This finding was in consistent with Al-Maimani (2008) though the competency and the sub competencies of the two studies were not exactly similar. This might be because almost all the educational managers were holders of bachelor degrees or post graduates either in the Headquarters or the Regional General Directorates in the MoE. In addition to that, they were going through approximately the same experiences and functional training programmes. Also the managers who worked in the ministry, had mostly worked first in MoE HQ and RGDs and due to their excellence in a specific field, they had been selected to work in MoE HQ.

Purpose built training programmes for educational managers are based on the level of competencies. The competences they possess determine the skills that will be taught to the group. There is a need to mix the educational managers in the headquarter ministry with their counterparts from the educational regional directorates during the training if they possess the same skills. The benefit from "educational managers competencies**" (**EDUMAC**)** model may accrue from the study to serve as a road map for building and facilitating training programmes for educational category managers. Different training packages that suit the different levels of educational manager should be prepared and given to them. The Training Policy needs to improve in line with the new training dimension. Linking the training track with career training should be associated with functional upgrades for completion of certain training packages. This would increase the motivation of trainees to attend training programmes and it will directly reward them. The training programmes should take into consideration organisational requirements. With the need to build programmes on Islamic values, the emphasis on the presence of clear formats through the Ministry and accurate follow-up by those concerned has to be made to develop conceptual skills.

Adoption of a strong evaluation system is needed so that the training process can be assessed in all its stages, starting from the identification of needs and then planning through implementation of the first training sessions and assessing the level of satisfaction to the end of the assessment of return on investment. The participation of the trainer is required in evaluation especially at the levels of learning and practice. The use of external experts should be outsourced to evaluate the training and to give impartial and objective judgment on the results of training, making sure that the return on training is equivalent or less than the expenditure.

The training plan needs to be based on an accurate training needs analysis. The Ministry of Education should adopt new methods that match with the number of staff in the MoE, in different fields, job title and responsibilities. Finally there is need to exchange experience and collaboration between managers from other civil service units and the private sectors. While implementing the training plan, it is necessary to take into consideration the suitable duration time of training programmes for the trainees, the right trainer for the topic, the appropriate methods or approaches and different aids.

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