

University of Dundee

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Developing HR Practices in public organisations

Investigating the perceptions of internal selection in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman

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Award date:
2019

Awarding institution:
University of Dundee

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**Developing HR practices in public organisations: Investigating the
perceptions of internal selection in the Ministry of Education in the
Sultanate of Oman**

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Developing HR Practices in public organisations: Investigating the
perceptions of internal selection in the Ministry of Education in
the Sultanate of Oman

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Education
School of Education and Social Work
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JUNE 2019

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list of abbreviations

AC	Administrative Court
CVL	Civil Service Law
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DJ	Distributive Justice
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
IJ	Interactional Justice
M	Mean
MOE	Ministry of Education
OC	Organisation Culture
OJ	Organisational Justice
NC	National Culture
PJ	Procedural Justice
SAI	State Audit Institution
SCT	Self-Categorisation Theory
SD	Standard Deviation
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SREC	School Research Ethics Committee
SVT	Social Validity Theory

Acknowledgements

All Praise to Allah (God) who gave me energy and guidance throughout this research and my entire life.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Angela Roger, for her consistent guidance and support throughout the research. I also thank Dr Richard Ingram for his support and valuable comments, and Dr Lisi for her supervision during the first year of my study.

Additionally, I extend my thanks to Prof. Divya and Prof. Ian for their encouragement and support, and my colleagues in the School of Education and Social Work for all our conversation and time spent together during the last four years.

My sincere thanks go to my wife Zuwaina for her love, support and patience, especially during the last two years when she took on the entire responsibility for the family. Also, I offer my thanks to my children: Ali, Ammar, Safiya, Moath, and Ommamh for their understanding to travel abroad for two years and the patience while I had to be away from the country because of my study.

Equally, my deepest thanks to my mother for her prayers and for calling me every night during my study to support me and motivate me in my research. I would like to thank my sisters, my brother, my cousins and all my friends for their much-valued support during my study.

Finally, I am grateful for the government of the Sultanate of Oman to sponsor my study. Also, I thank the Ministry of Education for giving the approval needed to conduct my study, and all the participants who gave time and effort to participate in the survey and the interviews for this study.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the candidate, Saif Ali Al Sheibani is the author of the thesis presented herein; that, unless otherwise stated, all references cited have been consulted by the candidate; that the work if which the thesis is a record has been done by the candidate, and that it has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

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Abstract

This study explores employees' perceptions of justice regarding internal selection in the Ministry of Education (MOE) in the Sultanate of Oman. The study explores the perceptions of all employees in different hierarchical levels and all the interactions which might develop during the internal selection. The literature highlights the importance of employees' perceptions of justice within selection processes both for the wellbeing of employees and for the organisation's effectiveness. Moreover, improving the selection processes would populate the MOE with the best education specialists and therefore make the MOE better able to deliver the best education system. There is scant literature that tackles the perceptions from the standpoint of social interactions and the influence of the perception of power in these interactions. Therefore, this study explores internal selection from two perspectives: the organisational perspective and the social interactions perspective. The organisational perspective explores internal selection by examining the process of selection and the management system in the MOE and applying the model of organisational justice to examine the extent to which employees perceive justice in internal selection in the MOE. The social interactions perspective looks at the influence of culture (national & organisational), self-categorisation, group membership and the power effect in employees' perception of justice in internal selection in the MOE. This study uses mixed methods to investigate internal selection in the MOE in the Sultanate of Oman, the research being conducted through an online survey and interviews with employees at different hierarchical levels in MOE.

The findings of the study show that perception can be influenced both by social interactions and organisational practices affecting internal selection in the MOE. The organisational culture has more influence on employees' perceptions than national culture, although the findings also show that employees' perceptions of justice are influenced by the national policies and laws which determine the status of public organisations in the society. The existence of policies, a strategic plan, and processes, is essential in standardising the procedures and making the internal selection transparent for all employees in the MOE. Moreover, the findings show a trend away from collective identity towards self-categorisation, drawing attention to the fact that employees' participation in the process of decision-making plays a role in their perception of justice in the MOE. Furthermore, the findings show the need for a system of feedback and two-way communication in the MOE, which would enhance the transparency of internal selection and lead to a positive perception of the MOE's internal selection.

Keywords: selection, internal selection, public organisation, organisational justice

Chapter One The introduction of the study

1.1 Introduction

This study will investigate the internal selection processes in the educational system in the Ministry of Education (henceforth MOE) in the Sultanate of Oman. This chapter gives an overview of the study, rationale of the study, and aims and objectives of the study. Finally, the chapter ends with outline of the study.

Employees are the most important resource of any organisation. Human resource management (HRM) continually adapt efficiency strategies for all employees (Berman, Bowman, West, & Van Wart, 2012). Al-Hamadi, Budhwar, and Shipton (2007) affirm that the dramatic economic and social changes around Oman raise expectations in relation to development of governmental practices in general and HRM in particular. Human resources (HR) in public organisations should be aware of the internal and external forces they might be vulnerable to (Stone, 2013). Furthermore, the Omani Government has to cope with contemporary international trends of HR in its governmental practices. However, according to Jreisat (2012) the public practices in Arab states are still weak compared to international standards because these organisations are missing administrative scope, such as strategic planning, in many aspects of organisation.

Several studies suggest that organisation effectiveness is linked to successful HR practices (Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees, & Gatenby, 2013; Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012; Zheng, Yang, & McLean, 2010). Employee selection, both in terms of hiring and promotion, is one of the basic functions of HR practices in the organisations *et al.*, 2012; Eric, 2012). Moreover, good internal selection processes lead to employee commitment and satisfaction in the organisation (French & Rumbles, 2010). Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2017) argue that internal selection processes in public organisations are by

their nature two-way. The organisation selects the candidate for the vacancy, while at the same time the candidate evaluates the organisation's integrity during the process. Choi, Jang-Ho, Lee, and Khan-Pyo (2013) claim that employees in practice construct different behaviours according to their different perceptions of the internal selection processes in their particular organisation. Consequently, it seems important that public organisations should follow a consistent selection system for all candidates. However, Van Vianen, Shen, and Chuang (2011) suspect that organisations select employees who fit with their culture. Selecting the candidates who fit with the organisation from the seniors' view, considered favouritism for many candidates in internal selection. Interestingly, little concern has been devoted by researchers to this potentially problematic area in Arab countries, and this seems particularly applicable in Oman.

As indicated previously, organisations in general and HR organisations in particular are influenced by internal and external forces (Singh, Darwish, Costa & Anderson, 2012). The internal forces include the directors of the organisation, relevant legislation, actions and interactions between different administrative layers and the individual employee's perceptions of daily events that influence his or her identity in the organisation. The external forces include political power, but are predominantly social, particularly in respect of any elite. The networks and networking of elite families directly and indirectly influence HR practices in governmental units (Greenwood, 2013). Al-Ghailani (2005) proposes that these elite families have direct influence in hiring and selection processes in governmental institutions in Oman. This perception of interference of elite families in selection processes could influence employee validation of selection processes in the MOE.

There is a strong element of social psychology embedded in HR management. Identity is defined in social psychology by social roles as well as the status of individuals in the social structure (Tajfel, 2010). Therefore, according to Tajfel's definition, employees have

multiple identities inside the organisations as well as outside them. These identities are influenced by the self-perception, and interactions within the socio-political system (Amiot, De la Sablonniere, Terry, & Smith, 2007; Hogg & Tindale, 2008). Power is defined in terms of the social space where culture and identity interact with each other (Bourdieu, 1989). Therefore, this study investigates the concept of power identified in the bureaucratic centralized hierarchal system of Oman. For the purpose of this thesis, identity will be examined in relation to various theories, for example employee identity as defined by the social identity, self-categorization theory which indicates in-group and out-group relationships . Additionally, it will investigate how different powers in the society, such as social and political, could influence employee identities and their perceptions about justice in the selection process in governmental organisations. Regarding employee perception, this study will investigate how employees validate the level of justice in selection process. Thus, this study will focus on the perceptions of the selection processes in the MOE of Education of the Sultanate of Oman and how this perception influences employees' validating of level of justice in the MOE.

1.2 Rationale for the study

One of the main reasons of the effectiveness of any organisation depends on employees' perceptions of fairness and how they validate HR practices in the organisation (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). The employees' evaluation of fairness in internal selection has a main role in organisation's loyalty and commitemnt (Al Hasnah ,2019). The researcher has chosen this particular area to carry out the research for the following reasons. First, Sparr and Sonnentag (2008) assert the importance of employees' perceptions towards interactions with and within an organisation. Schinkel, Vianen, and Dierendonck (2013) propose that selection processes should be considered one of the most important aspects of justice within an organisation. The challenges of strong but irregular demands on supervisory positions

in the MOE could lead employee to perceive some processes of selection injustice and prejudice for certain members in all governmental institutions in Oman (Al-Ghailani, 2005). The internal selection of supervisory positions in different departments of general directorates may have a strong relationship to their performance regarding the implementation of educational reforms (Al Belushi & Al Kitani, 1997).

The literature has paid little attention so far to the selection practices of middle-management managers in the directorates of education and to their relationship with the success or failure of educational reforms. The researcher argues that such lack of research in this area may negatively impact the procedures used for selecting educational leaders for the purpose of managing the educational reforms.

Since 1970, investment in human capital has become essential in the public and the private sectors to update the skills levels of Omani employees. The number of students has increased from 6,941 pupils in 1970/1971 to 514,667 in 2012/2013 and the number of schools from 16 in 1970/71 to 1,043 in 2012/2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013). This has necessitated the recruitment of more employees yearly to support and supervise school services. The total number of employees in the MOE in 2012/2013 was 76,491, with more than 10% working as administrators or supervisors (7,928) either in the central office or in the specific Governorate (Ministry of Education, 2013). In contrast in the academic year 2010/2011 the number of administrators and supervisors was only 6,825 (Ministry of Education, 2011) which means that 1,053 extra employees were recruited between the academic year 2010/2011 and 2012/2013. With a limited number of higher positions available, the MOE faces huge challenges in two ways: first, in creating an efficient process of internal selection for all employees to feel equal and have the same opportunity to compete for higher positions; and second, in selecting the most talented employees with

the abilities and skills to motivate, supervise, and evaluate other colleagues in the same department.

The Civil Service Law (CSL) stated in its Article 13 that all vacancies should be advertised either inside the government unit or in the newspapers except the positions with special nature.

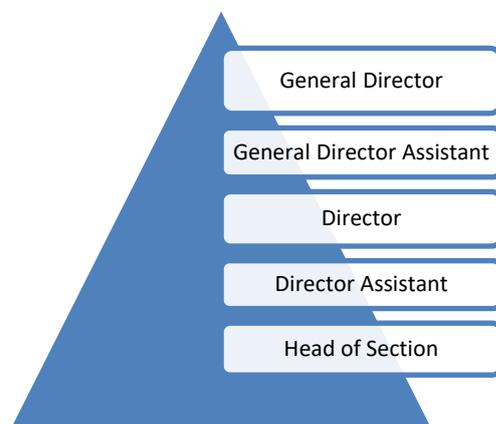
Article (13)

“All vacancies approved in the unit budget shall be announced in at least one daily newspaper. The advertisement shall include all the details of the vacancy and the requirements of candidates.”

“ The governmental unit can appoint in the positions with special nature without advertising by a decision from the Cabinet according to the cases individually” (P.12)

However, the practice in all governmental units, since 1970, was to rely on nominations to the vacancies in these supervisory positions by the Directors-General. Those who are nominated for Head of Section positions (considered the lowest rank in the supervisory positions shown in **(Figure 1.1)** below) will have priority in competing for higher positions in the government unit. Ministerial decrees of promotions to supervisory positions were protected by law till 2000. Having said that, this situation changed in the Ministry by issuing the ministerial decree (273/2015).

FIGURE 1.1 The hierarchy of the administrative positions in the governmental units



Effective since 2000, Sultan Qaboos issued a Royal Decree No. (91/1999) establishing an Administrative Court (AC) in Oman. The Royal Decree gave exclusive jurisdiction to the AC in all disputes concerning with governmental contracts and employees affairs with promotions, salaries, and allowances. According to the Chairman of the AC, from January till August 2014, 3,229 cases had been brought to the court (Juma, 2014). Predominantly cases were against ministerial decrees: between 2010 and 2012, 1,410 cases were held against ministerial decrees. The number of cases against ministerial decrees suggests significant levels of employee dissatisfaction with the internal selection processes for supervisory positions in the governmental units.

Table 1.1 Number of cases held by employees against ministerial decrees

Year	Cases
2008	327
2009	420
2010	590
2011	887
2012	861

This table shows that the number of cases has increased rapidly since 2008. The number of cases had more than doubled from 420 in 2009 to 887 in 2011 which indicates increased employee dissatisfaction with ministerial decrees (NCSI, 2014). In the light of the increasing number of cases, some ministries decided to follow the CSL in the internal selection processes for these supervisory positions, among them the Ministry of Education. This research will set out to investigate the relevance of the ministerial decree to selecting the employees most suited to the available supervisory positions.

According to Swailes and Al Fahdi (2011) management styles in Omani governmental units have affected negatively the employees' perceptions about their organisational commitment. The Ministry of Civil Service in Oman organized an international conference about the mechanisms of improving the Government's performance in the Al Bustan Palace

Hotel, Muscat, from 15-18 September 2012. Since 1970, the Omani government had a strategic plan to build the human capital capable of achieving the goals of the government in different sectors in the country, to strengthen the Omanis in different public organisations, and to plan for the labour market by making projections for required national capabilities in public and private sectors. However, the findings of this conference show that the ambitious plan of the government faced huge challenges, both in the public sector and private sector as well.

Another key thing to remember is that there is increasing concern that oil is still the main commodity for the economy, and given the fluctuation of oil prices as well as competitive international markets, this led the government realize that the human capital of nationals is the main pillar for the advancement of the economic and government performance in public organisations in Oman. One of the main outcomes of the conference was the recognition of weaknesses in the performance of government leaders in all Ministries in Oman, including the MOE. According to the conference outcomes, one of the factors that led to this weakness in the performance of government leaders was the use of inappropriate procedures for selecting those leaders for positions in the Ministries. Keeping the current situation would weaken the performance of the public sector, which leads to dissatisfaction of the services of these organisations. Moreover, this weakened performance could negatively influence the economy of the country and risk losing competitiveness compared with other countries in the area. Therefore, enhancing the selection practices in public organisations, and developing abilities, knowledge and skills of human capital would foster the HR able to contribute to the economy of the country, while creating equal opportunities for all employees to compete for the vacancies in these positions. Having said that, the complexity of public organisations which have their own internal social and

political influences makes internal selection more difficult to carry out – particularly if it this is to achieve justice for all employees in the Ministry.

Thus, the conference recommended an investigation of the selection processes for management positions. This study is the first to be conducted in the MOE regarding that conference's recommendations. In addition, in the area of Human Resources, it was recommended that a programme to develop the managers' skills and abilities and to create strategies to attract the best nominations in different governmental institutions should be launched.

Comparing the various selection processes deployed within the MOE it is clear that there has been a great variation inside the same organisation in terms of selection for administrative positions in the governmental units and selection for posts as school principals. The selection processes for school principals used to be more structured and systematic than for supervisory positions in the MOE and governorate offices before issuing the ministerial decree, where practices used for selecting the management personnel mainly seem to depend on ad hoc evidence-based practice rather than on a systematic criteria-based process. However, the situation completely different know with existing procedures of competition which create a new reality which should be examined in influencing employees' perception of internal selection.

Finally, as explained previously, after the protests in 2011 the Government adopted laws and established institutions such as the SAI, State Audit Institution, to ensure fair practice in all government institutions. This study is the first study after the 2011 protests to investigate justice (and fairness) in governmental institutions and to offer feedback for the government regarding the effectiveness of these efforts since the protests in 2011.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to critically evaluate the internal selection in the MOE. Moreover, this study will also investigate perception of selection processes as they influence the values of employees about the MOE as well as their future behaviour and attitudes toward the MOE. Gaining a deeper understanding of such internal selection practices could support the MOE in influencing these perceptions, attitudes and behaviour and to propose ways of improving the internal selection practices particularly in the MOE and in governmental institutions in Oman in general.

1.3 Aims and objectives of this research

The general purpose of the study is to investigate the selection of supervisory positions and how it is perceived according to culture, power, social psychological theories and organisational justice. This general aim is fulfilled by four main specific objectives:

- One** To critically evaluate internal selection in the MOE and how employees in different hierarchical levels perceive the internal selection processes.

- Two** To investigate the most important factors that influence internal selection processes in public organisations in Oman.

- Three** To evaluate the power dynamics in the organisation in relation to employee's identity, group membership and organisation identification, and how these dynamics relate to the internal selection processes.

- Four** To investigate the candidates' evaluation of organisational justice according to internal selection processes.

1.4 The outline of the study

This research contains eight chapters. The same format is followed in all chapters, each chapter starts with an introduction, then discuss the main topics of the chapter and ends with the conclusion. The main format of the eight chapters as follows:

Chapter one starts with setting the sense for the reader, then it follows by the rationale of the study, aims and objectives of the study, the outline of this research and ends with the conclusion.

Chapter two is about the context of the study. The chapter starts by giving information about the background of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the Sultan and his legitimacy in the country. Then it moves for exploring the social structure in Oman, followed by a discussion of the government. The section about the government starts with the structure of the government, followed by introducing the different bodies work for the government. This is then followed by employees' rights and the government efforts in fighting corruption, this section ends by explaining Arab spring in Oman concerning the perception of justice in the public organisation. The second part is about the Ministry of Education, the place of this study. The section starts by introducing the structure of the MOE, then introduce the selection processes of supervisory positions and ends by exploring the characteristics of the management system in the MOE.

Chapter three is the literature review of this study. The literature review is divided into two parts: narrative and systematic review. The chapter starts with defining selection, internal selection and tools used in selection. This is followed by explaining the theoretical framework of the study. Then, the first part of narrative literature starts by exploring culture, then social psychological theories, followed by power and identity and social validity theory and ends by organisational justice. The second part of the systematic review starts by defining the keywords

of the study, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sources and this part ends with results and discussion. This chapter concludes by stating the research questions of this study.

Chapter four describes the research methodology of this study. This chapter starts with the theoretical background and design of the study. This is followed by explaining the research approaches followed by introducing the research methods of this study. The research methods introduce the two tools of the study: survey and interviews. Then, the sample of the study is introduced followed by the place of the research, the ethical approval and ends with the implementation of the survey and interviews. This chapter concludes by introducing the tools will be used to analyse the data.

Chapter five shows the quantitative findings of this study. It starts by presenting the participants' demographic features: Gender, work experience, academic qualification, the title of position, place of work and applying for the supervisory positions. This is followed by the descriptive analysis which has two parts: the first part is about selection processes and the second is about organisational justice. The next section is about presenting the data regarding the differences between the participants according to the demographic variables. This chapter ends with a summary of the quantitative findings of this study.

Chapter six presents the qualitative findings of this study. This chapter starts by introducing the processes of data analysis followed by explaining the themes of the study. The themes which are discussed as follows: selection processes, culture, preferences for gender-qualifications- relationships with seniors staff and elite families, in-group and out-group candidates, external forces, organisational justice, general directors and power.

Chapter seven is about the discussion of the findings. The chapter starts by giving a general view of the internal selection in the MOE, followed by the triangulation of the findings of the study. Then, the main findings of the study are explored. The findings are categorised in three main aspects: the national system, the organisation system, and social interaction. Each

category is discussed in detail. For example, the first category which is about the national system. This category includes discussion of the national culture, organisational status in the national system, and the external authorities and CVL. This chapter is concluded by a discussion of the category of social interaction.

Chapter eight is the final chapter which includes conclusions and recommendations. The chapter starts with the aims and objectives of the study followed by the main findings of the study. This is followed by recommendations for the government, the MOE and further studies. Then, the limitations of the study are explained and as well as the knowledge contribution of this study, and the chapter ends with a reflection section of my PhD.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to this research, rationale of the study, and aims and objectives of the study and the chapter ends with outline of the study. The next chapter is about the context of this study, the Sultanate of Oman. It highlights the social structure as well as the structure of the government. Moreover, the chapter will introduce the organisation where this study takes place in. It will describe the structure of the MOE, the management system and ends with a description of the internal selection processes in the MOE.

Chapter Two The Context of the study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the context of the study, the Sultanate of Oman. This chapter provides a background to the Sultanate of Oman, and provides details about the Sultan's claims for legitimacy and the Sultanate's social structure, both of which have great influence on the selection processes (Al-Ghailani, 2005). Moreover, this chapter outlines the social structure in Oman, and looks briefly at the impact of the Arab Spring in Oman. It then looks at the nature of selection processes within government, the structure of the Government and employee rights and Government efforts in fighting corruption. This is followed by details about the MOE, and finally highlighting the selection processes and the managerial system in the MOE.

2.2 Context of the study: The Sultanate of Oman

2.2.1 Background of the Sultanate of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab country situated in the Southwest of the Arabian Peninsula of the Asian continent. Oman has a long coastline of about 2000 kilometers from the Strait of Hormuz in the north to the border with Yemen in the south and includes the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. Oman has borders with Saudi Arabia in the west, the United Arab Emirates in the northwest and Yemen in the southwest. The country has been ruled by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said since 1970. For many years Oman was not widely known around the world and it was considered an underdeveloped country before 1970. At that time, the country had poor indicators regarding many issues such as poverty, safety, social care, education, and health (Funsch, 2015). However, since 1970 the Government has engaged in huge planned reforms to develop the political and economic conditions in the country. Under the guidance and supervision of Sultan Qaboos during that period the country has become a recognized developing nation with high economic growth (Allen, 2016).

Oil and gas remain the main economic resources of the country despite the Government's attempts to reduce dependency on them (Looney, 2013). Oil and gas ratio accounted for 87% of the total revenue of the general budget of the Sultanate of Oman for 2014 (Ministry of Finance, 2014). As a result of this dependency, oil-price fluctuations could impact negatively on the government's plans including developing human resources in the country.

2.2.2 The Sultan and his legitimacy:

Highlighting how Sultan Qaboos over the past 48 years from 23 July 1970 has built up his legitimacy as Head of State would help understand how the national identity of Omani citizens is related to the Sultan. One of the basic factors has been the way that the Sultan shifted his nation to a modernized one accompanied by widespread international recognition of these developments in the country (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). Furthermore, the Sultan adopted a policy of gradual developments in the country in relation to his estimation of Omani citizens' readiness for such developments. While studies by Funsch (2015), Allen (2016), Cecil (2006); and Plekhanov (2004) state that the Sultan is a reformer and an exceptional leader who had built a modern country and transformed it while preserving its cultural, religious and social heritage, Valeri (2013) indicates that his legitimacy was only built by connecting such developments with action by the Sultan; this creates a sense of unique credibility for the Sultan and promotes the idea that his existence is essential for achieving his Government's goals. The researcher suggests that Valeri's argument is predicated on the Sultan's accomplishments to confirm his legitimacy in ruling the country. However, Valeri ignored the status of the infrastructure of the country and miserable living conditions and the high percentage of illiteracy [or at least the low level of literacy] in Oman before 1970 (Cecil, 2006). Furthermore, we need to consider the impact of internal and external political instability on Omani Government policies (Hughes, 2009) and on top of that the gradual developmental steps which were taken by the Sultan to increase citizens' participations in the process of government

(Cecil, 2006). Common (2008) proposes the same argument that the central power has always been in the hands of the Sultan and all his efforts during 40 years have created a myth of the great Sultan whereby all initiatives and accomplishments have been attributed to the leadership of the Sultan; however, the Sultan declares that the developments in the process of democracy in the country should be gradual and based in the country's tradition (Holland, 2013).

In contrast to the arguments of Common (2008) and Valeri (2011) about democratic process in Oman, Jones and Ridout (2005) argue that applying a model of western democracy in a different context of complex and political ideologies would be a misinterpretation of the gradual movement to democracy in the country. They believe that Oman, like other countries, has a distinct type of biodiversity of cultural, social and political aspects which determine the political development in the country. The researcher agrees with the view of Jones and Ridout that Oman is on the way to a form of democracy and applying western models would be inappropriate in the complex context of Arab countries including Oman.

The Omani national identity is built around the Sultan (the Head of State) who is in the same time is the Prime Minister (the Head of Government) and this dual identity is protected by the country's constitution. One of the articles in the country's constitution makes a distinction between Omani regard and respect for the Sultan as a person and his role in the Government. The article (41) states that the Sultan's identity should be honoured, and his commands should be obeyed (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 1996). The researcher believes this Article 41 creates both contradiction and fear in the minds of Omanis whereby they admire the Sultan but nevertheless are wary of any criticism of Government performance (where he is the Prime Minister) that could be interpreted as criticism of the Sultan himself. It is suggested that this political dimension affects Human Resources practices where, in selection procedures for supervisory positions, the candidates who fit with the organisational culture are selected in these positions.

For a number of years, the Sultan has delivered speeches which outlined the main strategic plans for the Government in that year. In the year of protests (2011), the main points of the Sultan's speech focussed on human resources and the performance of leaders in governmental units (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The speech declared that the Government already gave huge attention to meeting the needs of ordinary Omani citizens through educating, training and qualifying them as efficient actors in both public and private sectors. Regarding government units, the Sultan stressed that government performance entails a responsibility to serve the community with equity. He stated that any deficiencies in this should be remedied and particularly in respect of corruption in governmental units; the Sultan pointed out very clearly that all Government units should proactively take all measures necessary to prevent corruption and that regulatory authorities should play their full part in this regard, proactively applying the relevant law and regulations and avoiding conjecture and suspicion to prevail. Furthermore, the Sultan asserted that justice must take its course as it should be the goal of the Government with support from judicial and regulatory institutions to achieve their goal of fairness between all citizens without favouritism as all citizens are equal before the law (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). This speech demonstrated some awareness in the Sultan of the situation in the country and the next steps needed to legitimize fairness and justice in the country.

The limitations of this research include not evaluating the Sultan's character and policies in the country rather than investigating how the Government in general and the MOE in particular are applying justice in selection processes between all employees.

2.2.3 Social structure in Oman

The social structure of Oman is based on a tribal family system. Tribes are groups of people living in various physical geographical environments such as coasts, plains and deserts (Allen, 2016). The tribe typically consists of hundreds or thousands of members living in the

same place for decades. The tribe or the family has a leader called "Sheikh" (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). The Sheikh has the power and authority to mediate between the members of the tribe and is helped by elders and powerful members in the tribe who act as consultants for different matters of tribal life (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007).

Since 1970 Sultan Qaboos has made huge efforts to integrate the tribes and provinces into a single independent nation. However, according to Peterson (2007), the traditional tribe in Oman still plays a vital role in the matter of identity and allegiances despite the considerable changes over the past 40 years in the country. Recognising the importance of the tribes in the social structure in Oman, Sultan Qaboos tries to maintain good relations with the tribes through the sheikhs (Valeri, 2011). These relationships mean that the tribal sheikhs are actively nurtured and supported by the Government financially and politically. This explains the previous influence of the elite families on the decision making in public organisations in Oman.

In addition, Agwani (1987) suggests that Oman society is a "paternal society" where relationships spread from the family to the national level. This relation of respect and obedience between father and son in a family is found at the national level between the Sultan and the citizens. It is important to understand the role of Sultan Qaboos whereby he is regarded as the father of his people and he represents a national symbol of the country (Kéchichian, 2008). This view of the Sultan affects the perception of all Omani citizens as they expect all managers and leaders in different levels in the public sectors to reflect the Sultan`s wisdom and wishes. The same role is played by the Directors General as guardians of the system and select the candidates who fit with the organisation culture.

At the same time, it is believed that the family still plays a dominant role regarding different aspects of life. McElwee and Al-Riyami (2003) go further to characterise Omani society as family-oriented. This implies that the family is the core unit of society and relationships between and within them have had for centuries been dominant in all social and

economic aspects life in Oman. Al Ghailani (2005) found that elite families interfere in internal selection by recommending members of their families in supervisory positions.

By the same token, religion plays a crucial role in Omani society (Allen, 2016) and has done so for some 1400 years. Islam is the dominant religion in Oman like all but one nation in the Middle East. Oman is distinguished from other Arab countries by the existence of the Ibadism sect which is accounted one of the major Islamic orientations beside the Sunni and Shia (Allen, 2016). The three main Islamic sects in the country live in harmony, avoiding the complexities of other countries. This is supported by the Omani cultural instinct of avoiding conflict unlike many other countries in the Middle East (Landen, 2015). Aycan *et al.*, (2007) found that religion has direct influence in HR practices in public organisations in Oman.

2.3 The structure of the Government of Sultanate of Oman

Highlighting the structure of the government provide the reader with an idea of the government and how this could influence HR in general and internal processes in particular. Oman is an absolute monarchy in which the Sultan not only reigns but administers as the Prime Minister of the Government beside other positions (Valeri, 2011). The Sultan's power is over the state and society and the legislative power (Lucas, 2004) and the personal authority of the Sultan is centralized above the ministerial level.

Laws in Oman are passed by Royal Decrees by his Majesty in order to maintain the interests of the people (Alhaj, 2000). Royal Decree 101/1996 defines the basic structure of the state and lays down the duties and obligations of every council in the country (Siegfried, 2000). This Royal Decree gave the foundation for the state and includes the basic aspects of economics, political, and social in Omani government. It covers the legislative, executive, and judicial bodies in the country (Peterson, 2004).

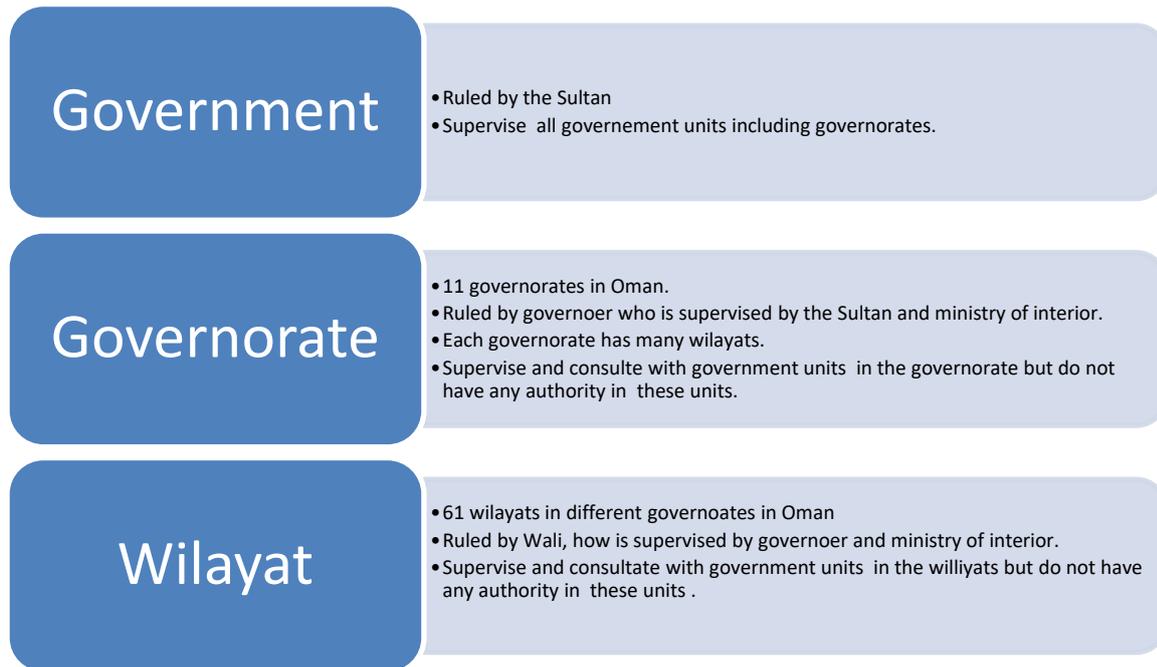
The executive body states that the Council of Ministers is headed by the Sultan or those appointed by him. The Council is the body which holds the responsibility for implementation of general state policies as well as proposing and recommending draft laws and decrees to the Sultan on economic, political, social, administrative matters of concern of the country (Peterson, 2004). The Council of Ministers has to make the best use of financial, economic and human resources by formulating aims and policies and propose methods of implementing these policies (Allen, 2016).

The government has different bodies **Figure 2.2** and the largest body is the one which controls by Civil Service Law (CVL). This body under CVL has the largest number of employees and where this study takes place in the largest organisation works under CVL. The Civil Service Law determines that all ministerial decisions with relationship to employees' affairs should be conducted according to the regulations in this law. This law includes all regulations that should be followed in recruiting and assessment of employees, financial promotion, salaries and allowances, training and scholarships, vacations and working days, and the retirement scheme for all employees (Al Hamadi *et al.*, 2007). Even though all the ministries with other governmental units are working under the scheme of Civil Service Law, many of these ministries use different schemes of selection in supervisory positions. This law promulgated by Royal Decree Number 120/2004 regulates the relationship between governmental units and employees as well as to ensure the clarity of duties and rights for all employees, female or male, Omani or foreign, in these units (Ministry of Civil Service, 1996).

The country's administrative structure, according to the new administrative divisions which was issued in 2011, is divided into eleven Governorates: Batinah North; Batinah South; Buraimi; Dakhiliyah; Dhahirah; Dhofar; Musandam; Muscat; Sharqiyah North; Sharqiyah South; and Wusta (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 2011). **Figure 2.1** shows the administrative structure in Oman. Each of these is subdivided into smaller districts (or provinces) called

Wilayats, which are governed by the Wali; there are 61 Wilayats in these Governorates (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 2011). However, regardless of the existence of Governorates, the central ministries supervise and administer all services for the citizens in the Sultanate of Oman.

FIGURE 2.1 The administrative structure in Oman



The Government adopted a planning strategy with short-term development plans for five years and a longer-term development plan labelled “Oman Vision 2020” (Al-Lamki, 2000). These set out the short-term plans and the longer vision aim to determine the priorities for the Government goals. Also in 2012, the Supreme Council for Planning was created to be the strategic council of planning in the country which includes the public and private sector as well: the Sultan is the head of this council (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 2012).

Equally, the issue of human resources become critical for a developing country like Oman which the economy still depends mainly on oil with challenging structure of population of 65% under 29 (NSCI, 2016). Besides the concern for preparing and qualifying the national

human resources and setting a long-term plan through providing the needed education and training for the Omani employees and implementing a solid system of human resources in public organisation (Aycan, Al-Hamadi, Davis, & Budhwar, 2007).

2.3.1 Different bodies structure in the government:

Rose and Miller (2010) believe that governments select from a range of strategies and mechanisms to establish relationships between and to mediate between authorities on the one side and employees and organisations on the other side. Moreover, Dean (2010) defines the process of government as involving authorities determining techniques and knowledge that combine all participants' interests and aspirations in order to achieve definite shifting ends but with unpredictable outcome and sequences. Over the past 49 years, the Sultan through the Omani Government established different bodies which operate as governmental units to accomplish its agenda, policies and goals, however, with different schemes of incentives and dependent HR processes in these governmental units (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2016b).

Each body (see Figure 2.2) has different scheme of laws and regulations of selection in supervisory positions as well as salaries, promotions and retirements which clarify the multiple HR schemes existence in the Government. The existence of unified bodies work for government could create a challenge of creating unfairness perceptions between employees in different bodies.

FIGURE 2.2 Different HR bodies in the government

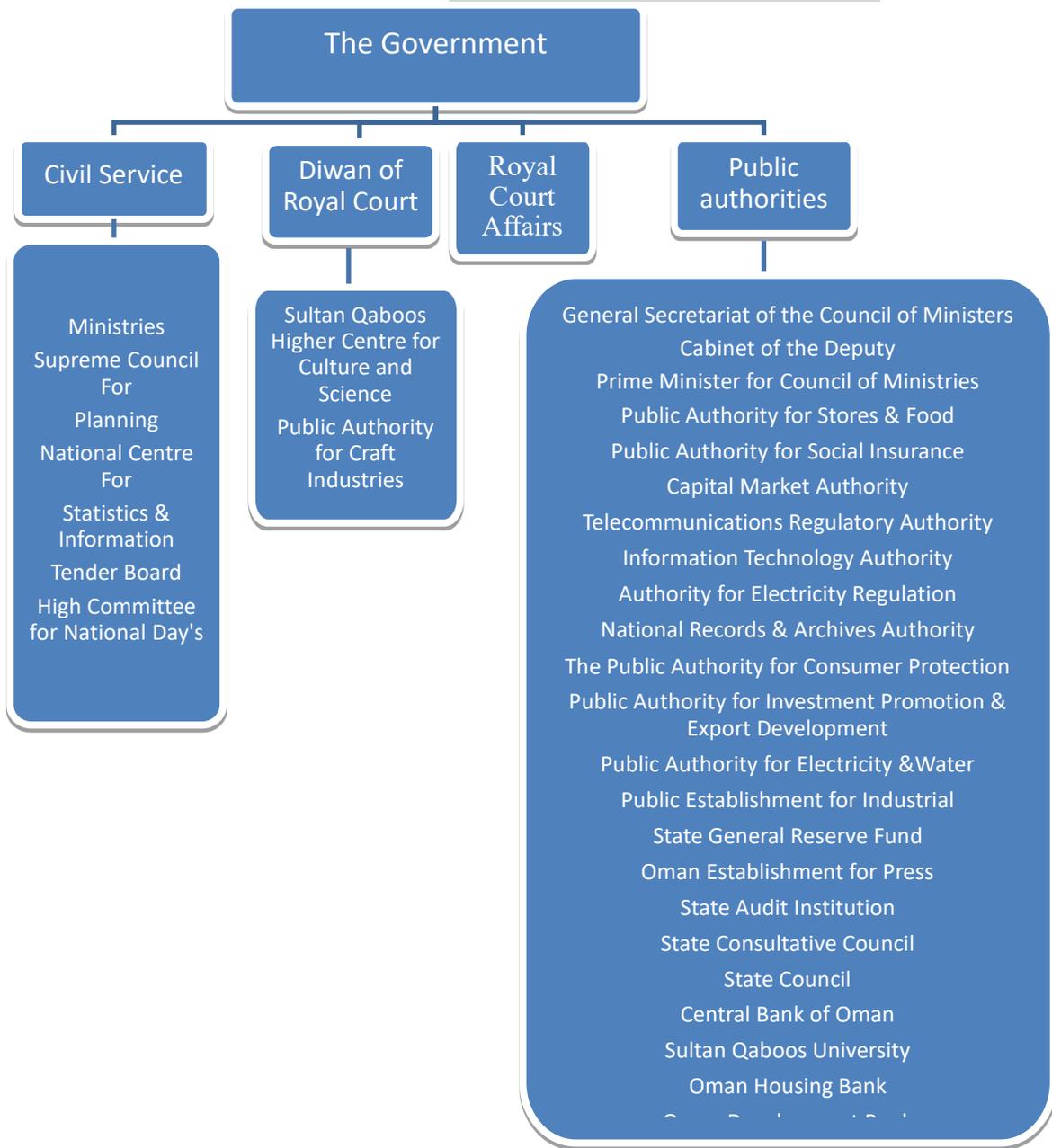
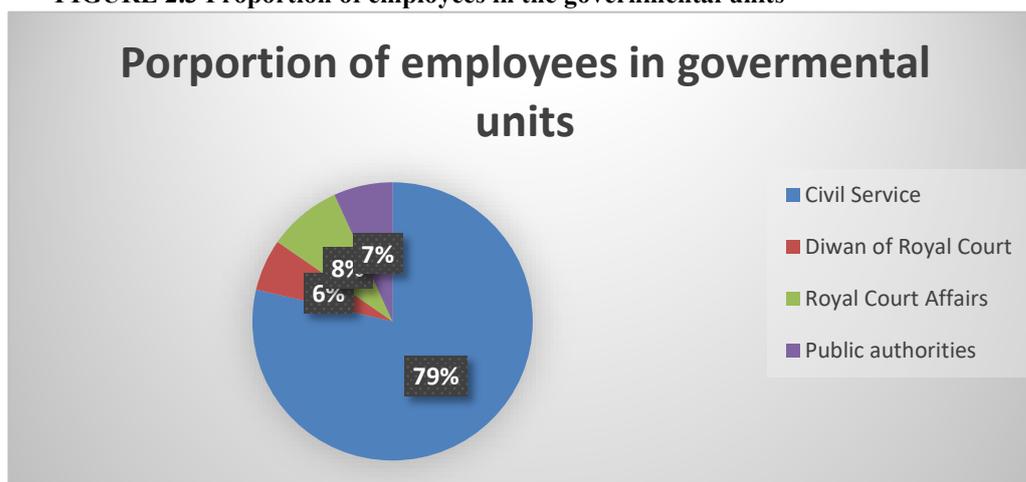


Table 2.1 Number and percentage of employee in different governmental bodies in Oman

The Governmental body	Number of employees
Civil Service	180,386
Diwan of Royal Court	13,850
Royal Court Affairs	19,552
Public authorities	15,679
Total	229,467

FIGURE 2.3 Proportion of employees in the governmental units



According to figures in **Table 2.1**, Government employees working in bodies other than the civil service constitute approximately 79% of the total employees in the Government service (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2016b). The HR practices in different bodies could lead to dissatisfied employees especially those who work in the Civil Service and who represent the majority of Government employees (almost 80%) (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2016a). It is suggested that the latter see themselves as gaining fewer incentives with greater stress and for greater effort compared to other government bodies. This study will investigate how the existence of different bodies with different schemes of HR processes affect employees' perception of justice.

2.3.2 Employee rights and Government efforts in fighting corruption

The existence of constitutional and judicial rights to control acts of the administrative authorities in the country is core to the protection of the rights and freedoms of employees. Moreover, it is an affirmation of the principle of legality of the rule of law in the country over all state institutions and individuals as well.

The Basic Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 101/96 is one of the pillars of the administrative justice in the Sultanate (Ministry of Civil Service, 1996). It was established to protect equality and fairness of the actions of management. In relation to equality, Article 10 states that the state should establish a solid administrative system that guarantees justice,

tranquillity and equality for all citizens. Moreover, Article 12 states that justice and equality and equal opportunities are guaranteed by the state. The same Article also asserts that all citizens are equal in competing for all public positions in accordance with the terms prescribed by law. Article 17 states that all citizens are equal before the law, that they are all equal in public rights and duties, and that there should be no discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, color or language or religion or sect, domicile or social position (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 1996).

In relation to judicial rights, Article 25 asserts that litigation rights are protected and guaranteed to all people, then Article 59 states that the rule of law is the basis of governance in the state and finally Article 67 establishes a judicial body competent to adjudicate in administrative disputes (either by the department concerned or by a special court) to show the law system and how to exercise administrative courts. These efforts culminated in the establishment of an Administrative Court and the promulgation of a law decree (Royal Decree No. 91/99) as an independent judicial jurisdiction to adjudicate in administrative disputes set by law and concerning the affairs of public officials and administrative decisions such as selection for supervisory positions, and administrative actions for compensation, contracts and other issues. However, Siegfried (2000) claims that these constitutional aspects represent only a continuation of traditional policies. Jones and Ridout (2005) argue that this constitution is nevertheless a step forward in the process of democracy in Oman. The researcher further suggests that the Omani constitution provides a basic core which shapes the relationship between the citizens and the state.

The State Audit Institution (SAI) was established as an independent unit in 1999, but after the protests and disturbances of 2011 the Sultan extended its prerogative and authority to include administrative affairs where previously it was involved in financial auditing only, as well as expanding SAI responsibilities and empowering it with necessary authority in new areas

(Ministry of Legal Affairs, 2012). In 2013, the Sultanate joined the United Nations Convention against Corruption (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 2013). All of these steps reflect the Government's efforts to ensure employee rights in governmental institutions.

The next section is about the Arab spring in Oman. This study explore to find out if the Arab spring has influenced employees' perception of justice in public organisations in Oman.

2.4 Arab spring in Oman:

Oman like other Arab countries was influenced by the Arab Spring of 2010 to 2012 (Worrall, 2012). The timeline of the protests in Oman actually began before 2010 with protests by teachers demanding changes in educational system in Oman as well as raising their salaries and allowances. Then in February 2011 small groups of Omani citizens started protesting in different urban centres in Oman demanding the Government made radical changes in the political, social and economic circumstances in the country (Johnson, 2014).

By the way of contrast between the protests in Oman and other Arab countries, one of the crucial and distinctive features which distinguished the protests in Oman from those in other Arab countries is that in countries such as Egypt, Libya and Tunisia the protesters felt excluded and wanted regime change, whereas in Oman the protesters were citizens that just wanted to reform the existing system (Johnson, 2014). In general, they did not seek regime change. This reflected the relationship between the Omanis and their Sultan: rightly or wrongly they believed that the Sultan had not been kept informed of ordinary Omanis' desires and demands for change in and by the Ministries and they believed that the Sultan alone was capable of the intervention needed to achieve the desired change. This relates to what was mentioned earlier of the Omanis' belief of the exclusive capability of the leader (the Sultan) to make required changes in favour of citizens.

The researcher suggests that these generations since 1970 had witnessed only Sultan Qaboos ruling the country in addition to all of the stories from their parents about the progress and security before and after the Sultan as well as their wealthy life compared to many countries around the world. What is more, the tribal structure and religious aspects such as that in Quran in chapter four: 59 (*O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you*) encouraged such attitudes. Aycan *et al.*, (2007) found that religion has the highest influence in HRM in Oman. This means that there are cultural and religious basis to follow and defer to those who are in authority. Thus, all of these reasons combine to create a conviction amongst Omanis of the Sultan's eligibility to rule the country.

The protesters raised demands and expectations for the Sultan to investigate the whispers and allegations of corruption in the Government where members of the Omani elite who remained in government for a long time gave preference to personal business interests instead of the national interest (Hunt, 2014). This explained the ordinary Omanis' general dissatisfaction with the performance of senior staff in government units. As a result of the protests, the Sultan responded by imposing significant changes in an attempt to reassure citizens and restore confidence in the power of the Sultan and in his system of rule and order in the country. Hunt (2014) claims that such government actions typically occur where there is a rentier state model of buying political acquiescence and regime security. The concept of rentier states used in the literature to describe the countries which used oil prices to distribute wealth between citizens on condition that the ruling family has ultimate power in ruling the country (Beblawi & Luciani, 2015). On the contrary, the researcher believes that this claim is far from the situation of Oman where Omani citizens still have faith in the role of the Sultan in ruling the country equitably.

Clearly the Arab Spring protests were some of the most critical moments since the Sultan took over the governing of the nation and which required immediate and mediatory

solutions to the protesters' demands in order to help the country avoid the deleterious consequences of these protests such as seen in the current situations in many countries of the Arab World (Worrall, 2012). However, western scholars have tended to evaluate the situation from their background of a Western culture that had started centuries ago and had experienced similar circumstances in the past took this experience and evaluated other countries in different parts of the world regardless of the history and socio-political status of these countries and without looking at how these countries had arrived in the modern world.

Therefore, the Sultan avoided sudden and potentially cataclysmic change and opted for gradual changes in the Government. Specifically, he replaced some Ministers named in the protests by new Ministers in the Cabinet as well as offering around 50,000 jobs either in the public or private sector (Worrall, 2012). Turning to the impact of protests in Omani life, one of the positive results was that the Government made it clear that ordinary citizens have a voice which can be raised and listened to and acted upon by replacing old administrators in Government Ministries and Ministers in the Cabinet and by obliging the Government to create jobs for thousands of unemployed (mainly young) Omanis (Valeri, 2011). On the other hand, the negative side of these protests was to create a broader pervasive default state of suspicion regarding corruption in all aspects of Omani society in both public and private sector institutions as well as the more narrowly focussed dissatisfaction of the performance of governmental units. Thus, the selection processes were potentially affected by these broader events as many believe there is corruption inherent in these processes even though many of the Omani Government units (including the MOE) increasingly follow transparent competitive procedures to fill these supervisory positions. Therefore, this study would explore the influence of the protest on employees' perception of justice in the MOE

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is one of the oldest ministries and it is the largest ministry in the Government. This study is investigating the selection practices in this ministry.

For this reason, the next section will highlight the structure of the MOE, the selection processes and the management system in the MOE.

2.5 The Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman

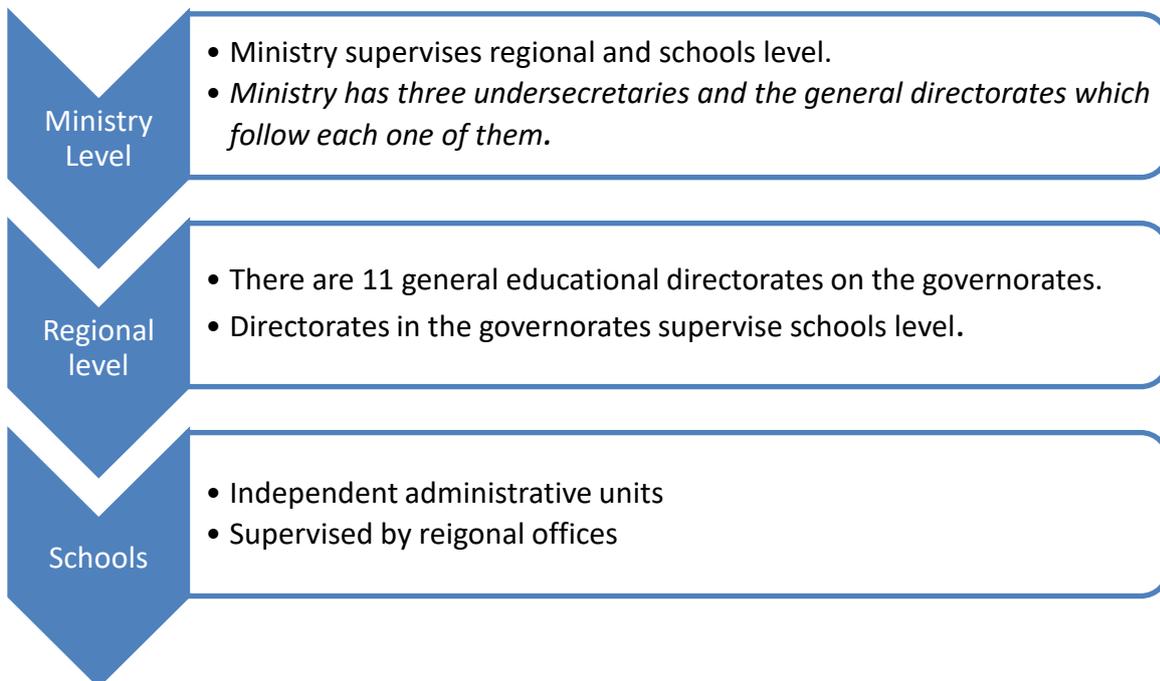
2.5.1 The structure of the MOE

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is one of the largest ministries in the Council of Ministers. The MOE is responsible for the education system from pre-school to Grade 12 in public schools and private schools. For public schools, the MOE has the full responsibility for the system which includes setting the goals, policies and the structure of the school. Moreover, the MOE is responsible for providing the financial and infrastructure as well as human resources which include recruiting academic and administrative staff as well as the training of these employees. In addition, the MOE supports schools with technical and administrative support. For private schools, the MOE has the responsibility for offering technical and administrative resources only for these schools (Ministry of Education, 2008). The HR practices (including selection for posts) in the MOE follow the Civil Service Law. This law determines structured regulations and laws concerning HR practices in governmental institutions.

The organisational structure of the MOE has three main layers: the ministerial, the educational governorates and schools (see Figure1.4). The ministerial level consists of the Office of the Minister and other departments which are accountable directly to the Minister. The structure has also three undersecretaries and the general directorates which follow each one of them. Under each general directorate there are number of departments that have the responsibility to supervise and coordinate activities with the education departments in the governorates (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The general directorates in the governorates have the responsibility of ensuring of implementation of all the MOE policy and decisions. The organisational structure of the education governorates varies according to the number of schools in each governorate. The governorate offices have departments the main responsibilities of which are to support, supervise, and evaluate the schools as well as to provide the link between the central office and schools. This means that those departments either in ministerial level or governorate level are the core units of the administrative interactions. This suggests that successful selection of supervisory positions in these departments, particularly heads of department, assistant heads, and heads of section would be crucial in the success of the MOE. Moreover, improving the selection processes would populate the MOE with the improved education specialists and therefore make the MOE better able to deliver the best education system

FIGURE 2.4 The structural level of Ministry of Education in Oman



Schools are considered as independent administrative units. They are supervised directly by the governorate's general directorates. Schools have many responsibilities related

to the implementation of the MOE policies but particularly the curriculum to be followed, the textbooks used and students' assessment methods (Ministry of Education, 2008).

2.5.2 The selection processes of supervisory positions in the central office and governorates

The organisational structure of the MOE has two main layers: one in the central office and the governmental offices; the second in schools. Even though schools are supervised by the governorate offices, as I have indicated, they are considered as independent administrative units. Comparing the selection practices between the offices and schools could give more insight into the administrative processes in the MOE.

The selection processes for school principals can be divided historically into two stages. The first stage was from 1970 to 2004, when there were no clear standard criteria for selecting school principals and assistant principals. Each governorate had its own way which differed from other governorates. Some of the governorates relied on interviews only and others relied on tests and interviews. This related to the acute shortage of Omani teachers in period from 1970 to 2000, when most of the teachers (especially in secondary schools) were from other Arabic countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia. This means that the candidates for schools' principals were few and varied between the governorates. Moreover, there was not a perceived need to harmonize the selection processes between the governorates.

The second was in 2004, when an advisory guide for selection was published by the Office of the Undersecretary of Planning and Human Resources. This set out structured steps including the steps of announcing the vacancies, terms of incumbency, and the administrative regulations of changing the job title of the candidates.

The selection processes for supervisory positions in the central office and the governorate offices has different pattern which can be divided into four stages. The first stage was from 1970 to 2000: all vacancies were filled by nominations from the regional Director-

General to the Minister Directly. From 2001-2005, the nominations from Director General are investigated by the Minister and undersecretaries. From 2006-2015, committee in the central office headed by the Undersecretary of Planning and Human Resources. This committee revised the nominations and at the final stage the Minister approved all the nominations. The fourth stage was where the Minister of Education issued a ministerial decree (No. 76/2015) with regulations and conditions to fill the vacancies which was based on competition rather than nominations by the Director-General and by instituting panels in the central office and governorates to select the candidates for supervisory positions.

The researcher argues the selection practices for supervisory positions in most Government units remained in the hands of the powerful regional Directors-General until recently when some of these units established competitive procedures for supervisory position selection. When we compare the procedures of applying justice and fairness, it seems that processes at macro-level (national level) are far in advance of micro-level (individual organisation level) in applying justice and fairness between applicants. Selection practices still vary between the government units even though they all operate under the same civil service law. To illustrate this, the Ministry of Municipalities adopted competitive employment and promotion application procedures over five years ago whereas other Ministries such as the MOE applied similarly competitive procedures only in 2015, and whereas yet other Government Ministries still (in 2019) depend on nominations by their Directors-General.

The consequence of this variation in standardising procedures in selection processes between units could negatively affect perceptions of employees about justice and equity in these organisations. Therefore, this study sets out to investigate the relationship between the rules and laws issued by the Government regarding selection processes and the practices of the governmental units that could affect individual employees' perception about justice.

2.5.3 The management system

There is a lack of academic literature about public management in the Gulf countries. Tayeb (2005) argues that management in the Gulf is based on talking rather writing, which makes it difficult to find records about the policy decisions. He believes that culture influences on the management system as a "hierarchical and centralised structure" is linked to a "paternalistic authorisation management style". According to Common (2008), decisions in the Gulf countries are typically influenced by the personal preferences of the senior leaders. It is a common to see in all ministerial memoranda the phrase "upon the directions of the minister" and this agrees with the conclusions of Common (2008) that the decision to defer to the preferences of the senior staff indicates the management system is subjective rather than procedure oriented. Moreover, it reflects a hierarchal system where the directions of decision-making are predominantly top-down and lower levels of management have little actual authority. In such centralised and hierarchal management systems, the managers focus on standardisation and following bureaucratic rules rather than taking initiatives to develop the management system.

On top of that, the preferred management system is one of collective rather than individual responsibility where showing agreement to all decisions reflects solidarity and power. Equally, this could reflect what Tayeb (2005) found about management in the Gulf preferring talking rather than putting things in writing.

Common (2008) argues that administrative systems in Gulf countries have been negatively influenced by the centralisation of the political systems. What is more, he believes that religion and culture shape the relationship between a high degree of collectivism within the group and individualism with those outside the group. Additionally, in the Gulf countries society exerts great pressures within managerial systems to achieve personal benefits (or benefits for discrete groups). This pressure comes from those who are influential in the society,

such as Sheikhs, tribal leaders and clan leaders, or senior staff who served for a long time in government and have a good network of connections in all governmental units. As a result, those senior staff in the governmental units have to balance the achievement of the government agenda with the demands of those influential individuals. Conversely, the role of the Government in mitigating demands in some cases by those influential people is seen as corruption or injustice by other members of the society.

The influence of families and tribes in the Gulf countries can be similar to that of political parties in the West but the difference between the two is that affiliation to political parties in the West is optional whereas in the Gulf belonging to a family is unavoidable (Welsh & Raven, 2006). Moreover, the social structure of Arab countries based on tribe and family makes pressure on governments to compromise with influential families and differs from the western cultures based on individual merit regardless of origin. For that reason, this may be overlooked by most western researchers where the same norms and criteria applied in the western cultures are applied to evaluate practices in Arab countries.

Another perspective about the management system is the privileges that the most seniors of the MOE benefit from. The most senior have strong networks with stakeholders inside and outside the MOE and these empower the latter to play a crucial role in many decisions taken in the MOE. A good example is the Minister's advisors. From the 1970s, the government created job titles such as "Minister Advisor" and "Expert". The purpose of creating these job titles was to support the senior staff in the governmental units with foreign experts to accomplish Government goals effectively. Gradually those titles of Minister Advisors were replaced by Omanis who often held titles as Directors-General. The same replacement took place for the experts who were directors, assistant directors or PhD holders in the central office and in the directorates. Employees in the MOE have a strong belief that some of these advisors

have influential roles in appointing some employees in higher positions or using their network of connections to exercise pressure to select their nominees for these positions.

This interference by those advisors created and continues to create great challenges and inconsistencies in attempts to spread values such as justice and fairness between the members of the MOE. Equally, it should be noted that some would use these interventions in their favour as nominated individuals would be expected to repay the debt incurred by their selection and their loyalty would be to their specific sponsors instead of to the organisation. The consequences of their actions for the future of the organisation where these individuals exert power and influence in the organisation may be significant and may have a detrimental effect on its development and success.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided information of the Omani context, and the context of the Government and the MOE. It has outlined an overview of the selection processes, the demographic of the MOE's employees and the legal aspects about selection processes and ends with the aims and objectives of this research. Chapter three provides a consideration of the literature in the areas that are linked to the selection processes such as defining the term selection, employees' perceptions and the tools used in internal selection. Then, the chapter explores organisational culture and national culture and how can they affect the selection processes. The chapter also provides an overview of the literature in power and social psychology theories where the study investigates employees' perception to find out how they perceive the selection processes in the MOE. Also, the study investigates the organisational justice and different types of organisational justice refer to selection. The chapter ends with a systematic review of previous studies in the selection of employees in Arab countries and research questions of this study.

Chapter Three The literature review

3.1 Introduction

There is increasing research about HR practices in organisations and how these practices related to organisation effectiveness. In contrast, few studies investigate how the identity and group membership with the perception of power in the culture could influence the employee validation of fairness in HR practices in public organisations. The validation could be influenced by the timing of the study which influenced by social and political circumstances during the study. Therefore, the researcher intends in this chapter to build the argument for this study by reviewing the literature in two ways: narrative and systematic review.

The researcher's pragmatic paradigm favoured looking for practical solutions when searching the literature review. Therefore, the process starts by conducting a systematic literature review which summarises previous literature reviews in the area, and how internal selection was investigated in the relevant studies. Moreover, the findings of these studies reflect differing study designs, samples and the tools used to investigate internal selection. The gaps identified in the systematic review set the scene to introduce the narrative and literature relevant to the main concepts of the present study.

The literature review sets a foundation comprised of existing knowledge in related areas, while revealing relevant gaps in the literature. However, the researchers are aware of the quality of the literature included in the study, especially the 'grey literature'. The grey literature is defined by Luxembourg as that "which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers, i.e., where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body" (Tillett & Newbold 2006). Godin *et al.*, (2015) believe that there is no gold standard for identifying the grey literature. Therefore, in this study the criteria of selecting grey literature is shown in **Table**

3.2 The systematic review shows that there are few published articles about selection and most of the findings are located in grey literature which was selected according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the systematic review. The main aim of the systematic review was to explore existing literature of internal selection, which highlighted that most of the literature of this area in Arabic countries is mostly in grey literature. Finally, a mixed method appraisal tool was used to investigate the quality of the literature of the systematic review and the narrative in this study.

The narrative section reviews the literature on selection processes from different aspects which are related to the research aims and objectives. The chapter will firstly review the relevant literature regarding selection, employees' perceptions and the tools used in internal selection. Then concept of culture, organisational culture and national culture explored in the literature which directly or indirectly influences selection processes. Then, there will be a review of the power dynamic and how the perception of power and relationships influence employee identity and relationships with different members in the organisation. Then, this study explores the literature on social psychological theories: social identity and self-categorisation which would highlight how the identity is structured as well as how group membership influence employee perception regarding selection processes. Moreover, there are different types of organisational justice and each of these types could affect the employee validating of justice in selection processes. By presenting these topics to the reader, the researcher will introduce the main concepts that will be used to guide the study.

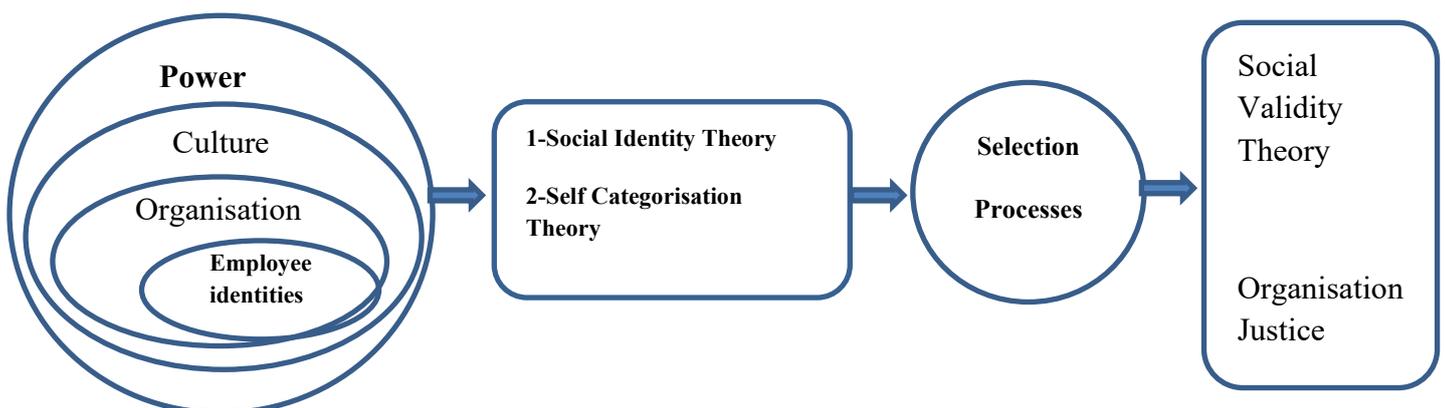
The second main area of this review focuses on a systematic review of the previous studies in selection processes in Arab countries. The chapter addresses the findings and discussions of these studies with narrative literature reveal the gap in the literature which this study aims to fill. The chapter begins by introducing the theoretical framework of this study to build the relationship between the main concepts and theories of this study.

3.2 The theoretical framework

The researcher presents the theoretical framework at the beginning of discussion of literature review to introduce the main concepts: power, culture (national, organisational), identity, and justice and relation between them. The researcher reviews literature for each of these concepts to identify related and relevant theories in exploring selection processes in public organisation. Therefore, the researcher selects social psychological theories to define the relationship between the identity and in- group and out-group members to explore the influences on employees' perception. Moreover, the organisation justice investigates every step during the processes and how they related to employees' perception of justice. in selection processes in the MOE.

Figure 3.1 demonstrates the relationship between the main concepts and theories of this study. According to Bourdieu (1981), power is the social space which interferes in all interactions between culture, organisation and identity . Heller (2011) asserts that power influences the relationships between culture and identity in perception and relationships. One of the study premises is that power cognitively influence identities perception and relationships within macro level (culture) and micro level (organisation). The identity and group membership determine power perception and relationships either in society or organisations. According to Al-Ghailani (2005), fairness in selection processes in public organisations in Oman influence negatively by the power relationships.

FIGURE 3.1 Relation between the main concepts and theories of the study



Social psychological theories are used to identify the identity and social groups in organisations and society as well, in order to identify the self and others. Furthermore, this study investigates, within the background of power perceptions and relationships in culture and organisation, the identity membership in social group in or out organisation could influence employee perception of fairness in selection processes.

The other main concept is organisational justice, which focuses on investigating employee perception of fairness during the process of selection. There are different types of organisational justice: procedural, distribution and interactional justice, researchers believe that each type of these could influence employee perception of fairness in selection processes. The argument focusing on identity and group relationships with justice highlights all aspects which could influence employee validation of fairness in selection processes in the MOE.

Having explained the theoretical framework of this study, the researcher in next section looks for the literature in selection, internal selection, employees' perceptions of internal selection, and the tools used in internal selection. Defining these terms would be essential to set the sense for the reader and to link them with the main concepts of this study.

3.3 Selection

Recruitment and selection are considered the main domains in Human Resource Management. However, recruitment and selection are not identical; according to Redrup-May (2010), recruitment is about identifying likely candidates for the vacancy, while selection collects information on the candidate's history and chooses the candidates who meet the position's requirements. The selection assesses the candidates' abilities and skills as compared with the vacancy's requirements and rewards (Boxall and Purcell, 2008). Therefore, the main

goal of selection is to choose the right candidates to help achieve the short- and long-term goals of the organisation (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012). On the other hand, Nel, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2008) argue that panels of selection face challenges in selecting the best candidate for the vacancy, with the goal of optimal success in filling the vacancies. This means that selection is complicated and requires a strategic plan to select the best candidates for the vacancies.

The presence of sovereignty and top-down authority makes selection more complex in public organisations, which increases the difficulty of selection processes in these organisations (Hansen and Villadsen, 2010). Unprofessional handling of selection processes could lead to high turnover and low productivity in the organisation (Richardson, 2011). Dale (2003) believed that selection decisions are among the most important ones that the organisation makes for achieving its goals and the wellbeing of its employees. Buchen (2007) suggests that when selection errors are made, organisations tend not to admit these errors but keep the candidates in the positions for a long time. From the above, it is clear that selection is a crucial process in the MOE and requires a highly detailed plan to ensure its success.

3.3.1 Internal selection

Organisations tend to fill vacancies either by internal promotion or external hiring. There is a debate about the most desirable way to fill vacancies in organisations. Farber (2008) believed that private organisations tend to avoid lifetime employment in favour of hiring external candidates for the vacancies. Bidwell (2011) compared the outcomes between internal promotion and external hiring and found that internal promotion is better for both short-term and long-term performance, besides avoiding the higher cost of hiring external candidates.

In Oman, the Civil Service Law (CSL) states that all vacancies in the ministries are to be filled by internal candidates. This procedure motivates employees by creating promotional opportunities as well as saving time and money for the Ministries. Moreover, the candidates

are well aware of the organisational culture and the level of expectations surrounding these positions. However, internal selection has negative outcomes. One disadvantage is limiting the pool to candidates from the same departments, thus bypassing external candidates for these vacancies who might have new skills and ideas to offer the MOE.

Van Dijke and De Cremer (2016) believes that internal selection could lead to inequalities between existing employees in the organisation. This leads to consideration of the importance of employees' perceptions of the workplace in the MOE, in terms of justice in internal selection and the influence of power, group membership and the MOE processes.

3.3.2 Employees' perceptions of internal selection

The interest in employees' perceptions, reactions, and attitudes towards internal selection started in 1980. Since that time, many studies have discussed internal selection and its importance for organisational performance and effectiveness. The seminal work by Gilliland (1993) on perceived justice during selection served as a basis for understanding the candidates' perceptions of internal selection. The Gilliland model depends mainly on the concept of organisational justice to examine employees' perceptions of selection.

The main principle is that employees' perceptions influence organisational outcome and employees' motivation to work in the organisation (Konradt, Warszta and Ellwart, 2013). On the other hand, Chan and Schmitt (2004)) argue of an existence of a real link between perceptions and employees' behaviour from one side, and outcomes of the organisation. In the same vein, McCarthy *et al.*, (2017) agreed that the relationship between perceptions and reactions on one hand, and the influence on organisations and employees on the other, should be further investigated. That being said, McCarthy *et al.* (2013) found that the outcome of selection influences employees' motivation and job performance. Moreover, Konradt, Garbers, Böge, Erdogan and Bauer (2017) found that candidates' actual acceptance is influenced by their perceptions of selection. The conclusion is that perceptions matter for acceptance of the

job, motivation, and job performance. Many studies have been conducted to explore employees' reactions; however, there is a scarcity of studies conducted in Oman regarding employees' perceptions of HR practices in public organisations in the country.

Equally important are the gaps in previous literature on selection. Many studies were laboratory-based studies using students for the sample (e.g. Chan and Schmitt , 2004). Moreover, the feelings and perceptions would differ completely between those arising in laboratory settings and those following actual rejection of a job application (Hausknecht, Day& Thomas, 2004). Moreover, using students as samples is not suitable for investigating perceptions of selection in many areas, as their responses will be totally different from those in real situations, and their attitudes may change over time (Landy and Conte, 2009). Schinkel *et al.*, (2013) argue that using students as samples in selection studies limits the external validity of these studies and that therefore the researcher should use real candidates in selection studies. The sample of the present study consists of employees at different hierarchal levels in a public organisation in Oman.

Even though Ambrose, Harland and Kulik (1991) found that social context has a relationship to employees' perceptions, social context was neglected in the literature on this subject. Greenen *et al.* (2013) found that group members influence employees' perceptions of internal selection. In the same vein, Reisyran (2016) believed that social relations shape our attitudes and perceptions about the workplace. Therefore, this study explores internal selection from social and organisational perspectives.

3.3.3 Tools used in selection

The researcher's interest was not only in exploring candidates' reactions to the process of internal selection, but also in exploring their reactions to the tools used in internal selection. The choice of selection tools is crucial for a robust process of selection of the best candidates in a highly competitive field. Chan and Schmitt (2004) argue that when concerns at the

beginning of selection were focused on the organisation, the preferred selection tools were work samples and simulations. However, the early work by Gilliland (1993) and Schuler (1993) shifted the focus from organisations to applicants' reactions towards internal selection.

Noe *et al.* (2017) argue that selection tools are not universally agreed upon. On the other hand, Anderson *et al.* (2010) argue that the findings on selection tools are consistent. For example, they found that interviews and work samples were the tools most highly rated as fair; résumés, references and personal tests were judged moderately fair, and honesty tests and graphology were the tools judged lowest for fairness. Cameron, MacKeigan, Mitsakakis and Pugsley (2017) believe that the reliable outcome of the tools constitutes their validity. In other words, it lies in the extent of the selection tool's ability to identify the best candidates for the vacancies. Therefore, the selection tools are important in identifying potential candidates for the vacancies, as well as in determining the candidates' reactions to the trustworthiness of these tools for internal selection. The MOE adapts CVs and interviews as tools to screen and evaluate the candidates in the internal selection, therefore, the next two sections will explore the tools used in the internal selection.

3.3.3.1 The application form, CV (curriculum vitae) or résumé

CVs are the first stage in the internal selection process. CVs convey information about the candidate's academic qualifications, work experience and skills to the selection panels. Moreover, the CV initiates the basis on which the panels will decide to accept the candidate, proceed with the subsequent selection steps, or reject the candidate's application for the job. Even though Moscoso and Salgado (2004) found that résumés elicit positive reactions to candidates, Cole, Field, Giles and Harris (2009) argue that there is a scarcity of literature that explores the influence of CVs on panels' assessment of candidates.

Roulin and Bangerter (2013) found that academic qualifications were the most important item in the CV, as they represent the candidates' intelligence, ability and motivation

for the vacancy; in addition, extracurricular activities were highly valued by the panels. Beyond that, Born and Scholarios (2005) found that GPA, the college grade point average, was used in selecting employees to work in the organisations they studied. Cole, Field, Giles and Harris (2009) believe that panel members make inferences about candidates' characters on the basis of CVs and use that information when evaluating the candidates in interviews. Thus, the importance of CVs for selection panels is crucial, as they determine candidates' chances of having further steps taken in the selection process. The MOE used CVs to screen and evaluate the candidates in the internal selection, moreover, the candidates are given points, for example the candidate who has PhD got 7 points, Master 5 points, Bachelor 3 points and Diploma 2 points. The candidates are screened according to the highest in the total points in the Cv. Therefore, this study explores participants' views on the CVs currently used in the internal selection for supervisory positions in the MOE.

3.3.3.2 Selection Interview

Selection interviews are the primary step in internal selection, and it is rare to find selection without interviews. The interviews are the preferred tool for internal selection, rather than, for example, cognitive tests; interviews are also the preferred means of internal selection in many countries around the world (König, Klehe, Berchtold and Kleinmann, 2010). The interview panels have to realise the importance of the impressions gained by the interviewees during the interview; furthermore, the interviewees assess the trustworthiness and fairness of the members during the interview (Dipboye, Macan and Shahani-Denning, 2012). The typology of the interview influences candidates' reactions to the internal selection. Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) believed that the format of the interview can vary from one with highly structured questions and responses to the unstructured interview in which all questions and responses are open.

Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson and Campion (2014) found strong evidence that structured interviews are better than unstructured interviews. However, Dipboye *et al.* (2012) found that the unstructured interviews were preferred to structured ones both by candidates and by members' panels. Dipboye *et al.* (2012) argue that unstructured interviews are flexible and give candidates more opportunities to perform than structured interviews. On the other hand, the reliability and validity of interviews are better achieved by structured interviews, since the standardisation of the interview questions is based on job analysis, and all candidates are asked the same questions (Levashina *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, this study explores the type of interview used in internal selection, besides exploring whether the type of interview influences participants' perceptions of justice in the MOE. The internal selection in the MOE has two interviews: one in the governorate for the highest six candidates from the CV points, the second interview in the central office for the highest two candidates. Therefore, exploring candidates' evaluation and how it could influence their perceptions of justice in internal selection.

The next section in the literature about the culture. The concept of culture is introduced which would help to understand the context of selection processes and how the national and organisational culture could influence directly or indirectly employee perception of justice in selection processes.

3.4 Culture

Although the term "culture" is widely used, different academic disciplines assign a different meaning for the term "culture"; for example, anthropologists define culture differently from sociologists, for example anthropology divide culture into three parts: material, ideal and social however, the social view culture as a set of beliefs, norms and ideas that shaped the relationships in the culture (Walker, 2001) Driskill (2018) proposed that culture is a systematic accumulation of different patterns of explicit and implicit behaviour, transmitted symbols,

traditional ideas, and values. Hofstede (1984) added a further perspective by defining culture in terms of mind-sets that distinguish one group from another and have the capacity to measure their behaviour.

There is an argument between scholars regarding how they view culture. Some believe that culture is a matter of "shared values" and consists of attitudes, values and beliefs. Others view culture as the "way of working" which reflects behaviours based on attitudes and beliefs. Yet other scholars view cultures as combinations of both "shared values" and a "way of working" (Gallear & Ghobadian, 2004). On top of this, Soares, Farhangmehr, and Shoham (2007) argue that the difficulty in differentiating between the culture deriving from various disciplines such as economics, politics, education and religion makes defining "culture" more complicated. This study takes the definition of that culture as a combination of "shared values" and "way of working" because if we take one definition and neglect the other, the meaning of culture will be incomplete.

3.4.1 Organisational Culture

Organisational Culture (OC) has a significant influence in our understanding and interpreting the visible behaviours and attitudes of the organisation's employees. Schein (2010) defines OC as the unique identity of a system of shared meanings compared with other organisations, which suggests that each organisation will have its own distinctive OC, definitions could differ depending on whether the organisation controls the behaviour of the members or whether the members' shared values and beliefs create the OC. Schein (2010) believes that an OC consists of the common and shared attitudes, beliefs, and values between the members of the organisation and where the OC could be created either unintentionally or as a sequence of deliberate actions from the management.

In addition, Al-Hamadi and Budhwar (2006) found that values, rituals and cultural norms positively influence human resource management in Omani organisations. Rituals are

the symbolic characters which plays role in determining the culture of the organisation such as dress or the preferable behaviour in the organisation (Bourdieu, 1989). On the other hand, Hofstede (1993) argues that OC is a combination of different tasks that new comers should experience in order to learn about the OC. Similarly, Helmreich and Merritt (2017) believe that OC controls behaviours of the members and demands a typical behaviour from all employees. Al-Khalifa and Aspinwall (2000) also assert that OC determines and creates the acceptable behaviours and attitudes between members in the organisation Al-Hamadi and Budhwar (2006).

From the above, the organisational culture in Oman seems more typically a combination of the two definitions where in some organisations (especially public ones) it is less deliberate and more esoteric but in private companies (especially larger ones such as Petroleum Development Oman) the OC is more premeditated and more normative. The reason for that is probably that public organisations must follow the same law that specifies all policies regarding appointments, promotions and legislative actions for human resources in the public sector whereas in the private sector each organisation has its own internal policies and procedures which help create a creative and supportive organisational culture. Al Ghailani (2005) found that the Civil Service law (CSL) which controls public organisations in Oman can be a barrier for these organisations. This may be reflected as dissatisfaction in public organisations about how this law controls these organisations in their selection and recruitment processes.

In addition to the previous examples, Schein (2010) believes that OC is represented in three levels that differ in terms of visibility. The first level is that of all observable interactions with a new member who is unfamiliar to the culture. This includes the language of the organisation, its emotional displays, the myths and stories told about the organisation, and the daily activities of the organisation that can be easily observed but difficult to decipher. The second level is that of the espoused values and beliefs. Schein (2010) believes that reliable and

transformational values can normally be transmitted from one generation to another. When these values and beliefs continue to work, they transfer as sets of beliefs, norms and behaviours. These beliefs and values then remain conscious for the employee as a set of tools to cope with different situations. Schein (2010) believes that we can predict the employees' reaction toward different situations in the organisation.

The third level concerns the invisible values that include what Schein called underlying assumptions. In this level, the employees turn all effective solutions supported by a value into a reality. These basic assumptions are taken for granted as they have already been repeatedly successful in implementing certain beliefs and values. Schein believes that basic assumptions are the implicit assumptions that actually guide the behaviours of members in a group in thinking, perceiving, defining, and feeling about events around them. In this third level, culture plays a crucial role in directing our attention to the meanings of things around us, and our emotional reactions toward daily events. Schein assumes that understanding OC depends mainly on linking the three levels of the organisation.

These assumptions about the third level would be difficult to investigate especially if the researcher was from outside the OC. This point is amplified with reference to non-native researchers who could find it even more difficult to interpret characteristics of organisation within an alien culture. Furthermore, each researcher would evaluate any culture from his or her own perspective and according to his or her own cultural background and experience which might be distinctly different to the meanings of those native to the culture. In this study, the researcher is from the same organisation which would help the researcher to interpret and understand the invisible gestures which would be a challenge for outside researcher.

This model proposes that understanding OC requires deep knowledge of the invisible level at which leaders should have the ability to interpret the obvious behaviours of the employees and in which they are sometimes unaware of shared assumptions that stand behind

their behaviour. The ability to interpret employees' reactions could be less challenging for leaders in Omani public organisations as they are from the same culture although this skill of interpreting hidden behaviour requires high order capabilities to apply them.

Investigating organisational culture requires looking into all aspects of a culture but arguably the most important factor is leadership and management (Schein, 2010). It is believed that leadership and management studies in the Middle East, despite the recent interest in investigation in the field, are rare. This is probably a result of the difficulty of conducting organisational research in Arab nations or because the area was simply not of interest for researchers (Omair, 2008; Rajasekar, Al Abri, & Tabouk, 2013).

Managers have great influence on shaping organisational culture; however, Westrick and Miske (2009) suggest that educational managers in many countries, including Oman, have only limited knowledge of their new roles in the 21st century as educational leaders which help them to implement education policies. In addition to this limited knowledge, Al-Mahdy and Al-kiyumi (2015) suggest that managers in the MOE are viewed as guardians of the existing education policies and traditional cultural values. This means that managerial environments in these organisations are rigid rather than dynamic in updating HR practices.

In this respect, the view that all administrative staff and teachers should play a shared or collaborative implementational role in the MOE policies rather than a role as initiators or leaders in a centralised hierarchal system could in practice be a barrier to leadership in organisations (Wiseman, 2009). In the GLOBE study of 62 societies (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) a cross-cultural research of global leadership and organisational behaviour effectiveness between the 62 nations, the main features of leadership in Middle East are team-oriented, charismatic, values-based, participative and human-related; however, autonomy was seen as an obstruction for leadership where its orientation was not aligned with that leadership (House, *et al.*, 2004).

In order to define the relationship between national and organisational culture, there is an argument about the influence of the national culture in the organisational culture and it is widely believed that in Arab countries the former has a huge influence (Al-Yahya, 2009); Common (2011) argues that the dominance of political leadership in cultural and institutional matters has influenced organisations in Oman. This study will argue that the existence of the influence of political leadership on public organisations in Oman has influenced the selection processes when the emphasis is on charismatic and transformational leadership in governmental organisations.

The values of each culture differ from organisation to organisation, and from country to country throughout the world. Weir (2001) suggests that contradictory values within the range of culture lead to many management problems in Arab countries. Some of these values relate to the bureaucratic regimes involved with the tribal and family affiliations that lead to nepotism and favouritism (Abdulla & Al-Homoud, 2001). Nepotism is often correlated with different aspects in an organisation such as selection and promotion, but also to weak organisational structure as well as intervention of family and elite actors in the organisation's decisions (Arasli & Tumer, 2008).

It is worth mentioning cross-cultural differences in views about nepotism: in Western culture nepotism is generally frowned upon; in other cultures such as China and in the Arab World it is considered acceptable even expected (Hooker, 2009). It is the same when we compare Western culture and Arab cultures: in the latter, family and clan relationships perhaps play a more influential (and more overt) role in shaping the relationship between employees and organisation.

In the Arab World, Rees and Althakhri (2008) believe that influential members of the clan or family tend to exert significant pressure on public organisations to hire or select members of the clan or family for different positions and the subsequent members of the

organisation feel obligated to pay back and favour their families in some way. Al-Ghailani (2005) in his study examining the selection processes in the civil service in the Sultanate of Oman found that nepotism is (or at least has been) a common (almost routine) practice where the influential members intervene on behalf of their family members. Therefore, this study will explore if such practices still exist in public organisations and its relationship to perception of justice in these organisations.

3.4.2 National Culture

National Culture (NC) is a set of deeply values, attitudes, norms, and customs within a group of people which transfer from one generation to another. NC is the group's perceptions of general terms such as normal versus abnormal, good versus evil, and rational versus irrational which influence their judgments toward different aspects of life.

NC has a greater influence on employees than the organisation and its OC has. Helmreich and Merritt (2017) believe that culture plays a significant role in our understanding of the changes which take place in group interactions within and across systems. He uses "culture" to refer to the nation whereas "subculture" refers to small groups like family and organisation.

What is more, the NC has an influential role in determining the attitudes of individuals (Karin Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff, & Rutigliano, 2014) and perceptions (Kim & McLean, 2014) that affect the behaviour of the entire organisation (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede (1980 and 1991) investigated the values of managers and employees in 64 different national subsidiaries of the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM). The theory started with four dimensions: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance; and masculinity-femininity.

In 1994 he added a fifth dimension (long-term orientation) and in 2010 he added a sixth dimension (indulgence-self-restraint). “Power-distance” refers to the extent members expect the power to be distributed equally; “uncertainty avoidance” refers to the degree of how organisation relies on social norms and rules to decrease unpredictability of future; “individualism- collectivism” orientation refers to how individuals are integrated in groups or act in individual basis; with “masculinity-femininity” masculinity refers to how the society shows preferences for achievement, heroism, and assertiveness, whereas femininity refers to preferences for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life; “future orientation” refers to participants planning and investing in the future; and with “indulgence-self-restraint” indulgent societies are those in which people feel in control of their lives and emotions and restrained societies are where they believe that other factors control their life and emotions.

The culture of Arab nations (added later in his study) presented itself as strongly power-distant, fairly high for masculinity, above the average for uncertainty avoidance and low in individualism. This study seems to agree with other findings that Arab cultures have high levels of power-distance which reflect their hierarchical and bureaucratic systems. It reflects the strong political authoritarianism and its influential role in the culture. Furthermore, the findings of high masculinity and low individualism in Arab cultures are compatible with their perception as paternal societies, rather like Asian cultures where group and kinship bonds are preferred more than the concept of individuals.

On the other hand, researchers such as Baskerville-Morley (2005) have pointed out that even Hofstede (2001) noted that homogeneity may be the target norm in other nations but not with the sample of his study. Hofstede (2001) used the term "Arab states" to refer to seven different Arab countries in his study but recognised that the degree of homogeneity could be relatively low between them. Moreover, Shaiq, Khalid, Akram, and Ali (2011) criticised the

sample of the study just based on IBM subsidiaries as not representative of the 64 countries. Despite many criticisms of Hofstede's research, he remains the figurehead pointing out the importance of national considerations in the culture and in investigating values across nations. His work encourages researchers in different sciences to investigate the role of a national dimension in the culture and organisation as well.

When investigating the relationship between national culture and HR practices, Budhwar and Sparrow (1998) found connections between national cultures and Human Resource Management (HRM) policies and practices. Equally, Aycan *et al.*, (2007) investigated the influence of national culture and national institutions on Omani HRM. In their research, respondents were asked to order various items twice: once for their current influence and once for their expected long-term influence. For the greatest current influence of national culture, they found that religion had the highest influence on HRM.

This implies that respondents believed that religion had major role in people attitudes and behaviours in their workplace. The next most significant influence on HRM was the expatriate workforce. This indicates that respondents believed that those expatriates with expertise still played an influential role in determining and specifying HRM practices in Oman. The third strongest national cultural aspect of influence was the socialisation process. For the expected long term influence of national culture the order of the items changed compared to current practices. Aycan *et al.*, (2007) found that expertise would have the more influential role in HRM in Oman.

This indicates that regardless of the demand to replace expatriates' positions of expertise by Omanis (Omanisation), the respondents believed that government and private sectors would continue to depend on them in HRM practice. This suggests that employees distrust government planning in Omanised top positions and that the Government would keep

relying on expatriates in the long term. Religion would also keep playing an influential role in the future in HRM practices in Oman.

The most influential national institution for determining the current practices of HRM remains civil service law. This is only to be expected with the importance of the role of the civil service law in HRM. This law underpins all HRM practices as the law defines the policies and procedures to be followed by government units. The second most influential national institution was vocational and educational training which indicates the importance of these educational institutions in training and qualifying the graduates to join the labour market. Moreover, it reflects the importance of the relationships between different courses in universities and colleges and the demands of the labour market. The third most influential national institution is employment law. In terms of the expected influence of these national institutions in the long-term time, the first and second were similar to current ones, whereas the third order has changed in favour of the labour market and the Omanisation programme. This clearly reflects the growing hopes of Omani employees for a future where Omanis fill all positions either in public or private organisations.

In this section the researcher discusses the culture (national and organisational) and how they might influence employee perception of fairness in selection processes. The initial focus of this study is on national and organisational culture in order to define the influence of civil service law in selection processes, the role of managers in employee perception of fairness, and the characteristics of appointed employees. Following this, the study will investigate employee beliefs in the presence and influence of nepotism and favouritism in selection processes and whether this is internal (involving senior members) or external (involving elite families and members). Finally, this study will investigate the most influential factors in HR practices in public organisations in Oman.

This section has tried to define the related concepts of culture, organisational culture, and national culture. Clearly, it is difficult to separate the general culture as it is integrated not only in the MOE culture but in social and national culture as well. The next section moves on to look at power. We have seen that power represents the social space for interactions between culture, organisation and identity (Bourdieu, 1989). Tomlinson (2003) argues that this third factor of space should be identified between culture and identity. Therefore, in this study, power is seen as the social space in the relationship between culture and identity. This power is embedded in organisation and culture as well (Kondra & Hurst, 2009) and the relationship of identity with organisation is influenced by the perception of power relationships and this perception influences employee validation of justice in selection processes in the MOE.

Heller (2011) asserts that power influences the relationships between culture and identity in perception and relationships: one of the study premises is that power cognitively influences and identities perceptions and relationships within the macro-level (culture) and the micro-level (organisation). Factors of identity and group membership determine perceptions of power and relationships either in society or organisations; according to Al-Ghailani (2005), fairness in selection processes in public organisations in Oman is influenced negatively by such power relationships.

3.5 Power and Identity

The relationship between culture and identity is manifested by the dimensions of power in two ways: perception and relationships (Heller, 2011). However, there is a debate about how to see power as some believe it is unconscious actions taken daily in the culture and social domain to place members of the society in the social hierarchal such as Bourdieu (1989) whereas others such as Foucault regard power as disciplinary based on control and discipline in a relational perspective which related to the techniques adapted by government to control

citizens for the protection of their way of life and their lives (Bevir, 1999). Therefore, the discussion of power in this section will focus on Bourdieu's model of power which is predicated on the relationship between symbolic power, culture and identity. Moreover, the researcher argues that power relationships for both political and social power have both direct and indirect relationships with selection processes; thus, power relationships will be discussed in this section.

While Bourdieu (1989) thinks that power is created in the target culture in a symbolic way, Foucault sees power as beyond the structure of the culture (Townley, 1993). Bourdieu (1989) asserts that the complex and interrelated society should not be viewed as consisting of conflicting views rather than as multiple and relational layers. In organisations, Bourdieu (1989) argues that employee identities can be seen as agencies, with the structure being the organisation; in the structure, the perception of the self and relationships to others in groups is influenced by the social space in this structure. Bourdieu (1989) proposes a model which combines symbolic power, culture and identity. He claims that organisations have multiple layers: an employee level which is associated with capital; a meso-level with what he calls "habitus"; and fields at the macro-level.

To understand organisations we should start with the employee level and identity, where he believes that employees adopt certain capital such as economic, social and culture and choose the forms that suit their life. Bourdieu (1989) asserts that employees should not simply be viewed as a part of the structure but as a reflexive way of the structural interrelated system which includes social, cultural and economic constraints as well as the social dynamic life in organisation and society (Williams, 1995). This indicates that the candidates who have more capital such as social or cultural would have preference in the internal selection. Al Ghailani (2005) found that social capital (families) determines success in selection and hiring

in public organisations in Oman. This study explores if any capital has any preference in internal selection in the MOE.

In addition, symbolic capital is any form of capital that leads to recognition of that capital. Bourdieu (1989) used the term “symbolic power” which is embedded in the habitus level. Bourdieu argues that “habitus” is the socialised process which guides the thinking and behaviour of members of the society unconsciously; in other words “habitus” is the traditional methods of maintain social order. In contrast, Farnell (2000) argues that the habitus level includes the unconscious which controls most of the individuals interactions outside world. However, Reay (2004) contends that employees develop new facets of identity when they question their actions and at that time the level of unconscious habitus transfers to the conscious. The habitus could influence the members of panels by selecting the candidates who fit with their unconscious preference for these positions.

In addition, Bourdieu (1989) believes that habitus is the way of how we look for the symbolic power and it is based in relationship to social space either in organisations or society (Bourdieu, 1989). The social space is conscious and guides all our practices in the society. According to Bourdieu (1989), this process is not fixed and can be changed over time and in unexpected situations. Another terminology was introduced by Bourdieu is “doxa”. Bourdieu defines doxa “the correspondence between the objectivism order and subjective principals of an organisation”, in other words doxa is a reproduction of the myth until it legitimatise by the society. This indicates that the candidates who well aware of the doxa of organisation can be preferable for selection panels in the MOE (Garrett, 2007).

Power relationships can also be understood in terms of political power and social power. Public organisations are linked with political and power environments; consequently, understanding the political system and power around the organisation is essential to understand

these public organisations (Allen, *et al.*, 2003). Contrary to Bourdieu's views that power starts with individuals and institutions, Foucault recommends that power is not an instrument or part of structure rather than power that is embodied everywhere in the society (Bevir, 1999). He adds that power is shaped differently in each society by its politics, mechanisms and techniques by those who have the control of power in the society. In relationship to internal selection, this means that candidates who have a relationship with the seniors will be preferable to selection panels in the MOE.

Lukes (2004) defines three faces of power: open face, secretive face and manipulation face. The open face of power is where decision making by the Government is shared with the citizens. The secretive face is where decisions are made behind closed doors and citizens are not allowed to discuss these decisions. The third face of power, the manipulative face, is where the government serves its members' interests by creating false ideologies of consciousness of their identities and status in the society. All three can be seen in Oman. Valeri (2011) describes the Omani Government's success in gradually changing the loyalty from clan and tribe to the state and how Omani identities are legitimized through the promulgation of a national identity. However, Luke (2004) argues that the definition of three faces of power misunderstands the nature of power. Luke (2004) stresses that power exists to shape our identities and our actions as well; what is more that power exists in our daily actions in the rules, norms and customs that structure our identities in the society.

Beblawi and Luciani (2015) argue that national identities in Arab Gulf states are based on rentier states where ruling families distribute resources from oil to support and confirm their legitimacy and to monopolize the political governance in these states. The rentier states represent a dependence model of power which relies on social power constructed through social interactions and which is implicitly predicated on the dependency of individual members (

Omeje, 2017). This indicates that the candidates who have the social power will be preferable to the selection panels.

Simon and Oakes (2006) suggest that a dependence model of power can be identified only in group interactions where self-categorization is replacing social identity. Social identity theory is built on identifying the social group and how its members are dependent on material resources such as rewards and non-material resources such as information and protection (Hornsey, 2008). Furthermore, members evaluate their loyalty to the group depending on the group's ability to satisfy their needs and demands. This study is investigating how members of departments can be influenced if they did not get selected to supervisory positions and how they will consequently perceive the relationship between them and their departments. Combining national identity and dependence model of the state, could suggest that there is a dependence model where the Omani government legitimately distributes the positions to elite families and the employees who are loyal to the national identity from the government perspective.

The researcher would argue that consensual power can best describe the situation in Oman. This consensual power is the level at which all parties in society are acknowledged as amongst the sources of power and consequently decide not to challenge the existing power when balancing it against their own interests (Haugaard, 2003). On the other hand, Navarro (2006) believes that governments use "misrecognition" to mislead and misrepresent the status of less powerful individuals as natural rather than culturally constructed. Moreover, Moncrieff and Dinerstein (2015) argue that individuals decide not to contest the powerful because of their fear of the consequences, However, Haugaard (2003) asserts that individuals do not contest the powerful because of their fear rather than a desire to support the existing social order . On the other hand, this contradicts with the cases taken out against ministerial decrees of promotions which could indicate transmission of Omani identity from collective to individual identity.

Burrell (1988) believes that power exists through a network of connected relationships and that through the dynamic power of these relationships, members identities are formed and influenced.

Social power has a major role on public organisation in Oman (Common, 2011). In the past, the structure of the society was based on the power of the leader of the tribe, the sheikh, and all members of the tribe were dependent on his power to protect it (Allen, 2016). At this stage, the power of dependence was clearer where the structure of the society was simple and more fragmented, and most significantly where the leader's role in solving in-group matters and protecting the tribe in the face of threats from out-group members was clear and generally unchallenged. However, the Omani Government has largely succeeded in shifting the loyalty of Omanis from the tribes and their clans to national institutions (Valeri, 2011).

The social progress and power distributions in the Arab states in general and in Oman in particular influence the structure of the social identities. The movement of Arab society from tribal feudalism to a modernized system with many challenges in unstable political situations within the Middle East, in large part deriving from globalisation and the rapid spread of new technologies, has had a huge impact in shaping Omani identities: in this respect (Howard *et al.*, 2011) found a positive relationship between social media and the Arab Spring.

Social power in Omani society has a huge impact on Omani identity because it is believed that family (or perhaps clan) has had a dominant role in creating this identity (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). This dominant role has been inspired by religion as well as the traditions and customs in the Omani society (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003) and in fact the two are difficult to separate. Social power affects any developing Omani identity because the society is constructed of hierarchical powerful families and each member's identity status is affected by the level of his or her family in this hierarchy (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). The

status of the member's family affects all relationships with out-group members where his or her identity is salient and powerful over other members in the society. This is also reflected in the culture of governmental institutions where family status still has an influential role in the selection processes in these organisations (Al-Ghailani, 2005).

This study is investigating power that is diffused throughout Omani society and expressed in the identity of employees and their perception of relationships in terms of in-group and out-group and how these relationships are shaped in public institutions within the context of the society. The researcher argues that understanding the role of power can support governmental institutions in their efforts to establish justice in an organisation in general and particularly in the selection processes of middle management positions.

This section of the literature review has focused on power structuring within the social space and on influencing the relationship between culture and identity. Also, power relationships were discussed to investigate how these relationships could have an impact on employee perceptions of fairness in selection processes in the MOE. However, social identity and how it is structured and related to other members in society and organisation can be investigated through social psychological theories. Therefore, the next section will look at two social psychological theories investigating the identity and relationships within in-group and out-group relationships and how these perceptions could affect any validation of selection processes.

3.6 Social Psychological Theories:

In a large centralised hierarchical organisation, any imposed consensus could be challenging for different administrative layers. Therefore, an investigation of each group in the administrative level (senior staff, middle management and junior staff) through social

psychological theories would give more depth and overview of how each group perceived the selection processes in the MOE.

3.6.1 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is rooted in social psychology as a theory of defining identity as a member of a social group and how the social system creates individuals' own place in the society (Hogg, 2001). This theory depends on individuals evaluating their own identity compared to other members of the group and on intergroup relationships to enhance positive identity within the group (Hogg, 2006). SIT explains the cognitive process for intergroup discrimination that is called social completion (Turner, 1975). Demands of self-evaluation are held to motivate group members to adopt behaviours to change their status with both in-group and out-group members (Knippenberg & Ellemers, 1990). Additionally, SIT explains the progress of all group members within the social system. The social context has two aspects: societal norms and societal value. Societal norms relate to group norms during competition, for example in-group favouritism (Spears & Manstead, 1989). This indicates that employees would prefer candidates from the same sections and departments. Societal value refers to maintaining the high status of the in-group. Thus, according to in-group values and norms in selection processes fairness can be agreed with all in-group and out-group members; however, these processes could be just in favour of in-group members only (Reicher, 2004).

Brown (2015) argues that organisations influence identification of the employee which lead to their satisfaction and commitment. According to SIT, an organisation is an aspect of social identification where it resembles a social unit (Hogg, 2006). This refers that the high status of organisation has positive identifications to its employees. with Prototypically employee organisation characteristics guarantee organisation membership, and this enhances employee self-esteem. Moreover, members of organisations typically strive to enhance their status in the organisation in order to present and protect their identity in a positive manner

(Haslam & Ellemers, 2005). Oakes, Haslam, and Turner (1994) claim that emotional significance would normally contribute positively to the membership of a social group. The researcher argues that when the status of organisation is low in the society, the employees in these organisations will disconnect themselves emotionally. McInnes and Corlett (2012) assert that employee identities could be influenced not only by organisation but by the section, department and area in which they work.

While He *et al.*, (2014) suggests that employee identification in an organisation is related to involvement with and commitment to that organisation's goals and values, Alvesson, Lee Ashcraft, and Thomas (2008) maintain that such employee identification is more a matter of social identity construction. Moore, Susskind, and Livingston (2016) posit that employees involved in selection processes would prefer discrimination regarding candidates outside their section department or area. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that competition between members of the group could negatively influence members' values and norms as their differences are brought out (Brown, 1996). One of the strengths of this latter theory is in claiming that in-group membership is sufficient to create favouritism towards in-group members, which makes it interesting to investigate selection processes for how the relationships of in-groups and out-groups could influence these processes.

SIT holds that employees compare their organisation's values and practices with those of other organisations. Furthermore, Wagner, Lampen, and Syllwasschy (1986) claim that group members accept the negative values and reverse them to positive ones as a self-defence mechanism from the threats of outgroup members. From their perspective as members in the MOE in-group employees tend to be unbiased and reliable in evaluating selection processes because such evaluation influences their perception of self-esteem as well as signalling their commitment to the MOE (Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton, & Swart, 2005). Employees interpret information to evaluate their self-worth in the MOE, whilst the MOE's decisions

regarding promotion to higher positions is taken as an indication of how the MOE valued the employee's contributions which in turn supports his or her social reputation and status in the broader society (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). In creating a link between selection processes and group categorisation, this study investigates which group (work group or social group) is salient during selection processes. Oakes *et al.*, (1994) point out that when one group becomes more salient the other group reciprocally becomes less salient. This means that when either the social group or the work group is salient, employees will prefer members from same group rather than out-group members (Turner & Reynolds, 2011).

One of the main principles of SIT concerns these in-group and out-group relationships. However, SIT focuses also on relationships with other groups in the society. SIT claims that individuals are classified into different social groups in order to maintain high self-esteem. As we have seen, such groups exist by obtaining social meaning through their relationships to other groups in the society by categorising the social world into in-group and out-group (Hogg, 2001). Tajfel (1970) was the originator of the view of how social influences shape group perceptions of positively viewed in-group and out-group relationships. Van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) claimed that social groupings influence our perceptions and feelings about out-group members. Members of groups reduce the uncertainty about their identity by joining social groups (Hogg, 2006; Turner, 1982). This indicates that social group (workplace) has influenced on how employees perceive fairness in internal selection in the MOE.

The tendencies would be to favour in-group members rather than out-group members. Additionally, Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament (1971) found that unidentified in-group members are preferable to unidentified out-group members. In selection processes it could be the same in favour of in-group members even if they are unidentified compared to out-group members. Lu, Chen, Huang, & Chien (2015) propose that demographics could influence group

formation: members tend to group according to their heterogenic demography (for example; ethnicity, gender, or age). The differences between groups are known as prototypes.

This is another principal of SIT: prototypes are the set of attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that distinguish one group from other groups. Members of groups use this set to make judgments of the most prototypical members in the same group and prototypical differences to the out-group (Hogg, 2001). Members are less seen as individuals rather than as matching the in-group prototype which means that more prototypical members would be stronger and more influential in the group (Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). In-group members in organisations tend to agreed more in their attitudes and be more confident with prototypical than non-prototypical members (Knippenberg, 2000). According to Hogg (2001), if a member occupied the most prototypical position for a longer time, he would be stronger and have greater influence over others.

Another principal of SIT is the relationship between leader and members. In SIT the influences between the leader and members are exchanged. Leaders practise their ability to actively influence members to agree with their requests and suggestions with fewer members likely to disagree with them (Hogg, van Knippenberg, & Rast III, 2012). At the same time, members endorse their leaders who act on behalf of the group in three ways (Hogg, 2001).

1. Leader commitment

Commitment can be translated in terms of the leader's behaviour and expressed attitudes. Moreover, the leader's tendencies to sacrifice time, money and effort reveal his/her commitment to the group.

2. In-group favouritism

This concerns the leader's tendencies to serve the interests of the in-group over out-group members. The in-group members are looking for the services and actions that

distinguish the group from other groups materially and symbolically. These services reflect the powerful status of the group in the society.

3. Procedural fairness

The fairness procedures reflect the degree of respect and recognition for the members in the group. These procedures play an important role in social identity especially when it is identified by the group.

However, the main limitation of these studies is that in-group relationships are based on favouritism and discrimination. Moreover, one particular limitation of SIT for out-group favouritism where high-group and low-group members favour high group members which is not applicable for the MOE where all groups are equal (Jetten, McAuliffe, Hornsey & Hogg, 2006). The researcher argues that the MOE is part of the Omani culture and all norms and values found in the culture are reflected in the MOE.

This section discussed Social Identity Theory and the main aspects of this theory. The second theory is about self-categorisation which focuses on the member rather than on the group's influence in creating the member's identity.

3.6.2 Self Categorisation theory

Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) is essentially an extended view of social identity theory (SIT) in the investigation of the relationship between the self-concept and group relationships. According to (Hornsey, 2008) SCT was an expanded view from intergroup relationships to intragroup processes proposed by (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). The main focus of SCT is on identity rather than on any categorization processes in the investigation of personal and intergroup relationships (Hornsey, 2008). SCT proposes that depersonalization, as one of the cornerstones of SCT, refers to self-conceptualization of the self and others either in in-group or out-group members (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

SCT can be influenced by comparison to other employees in other organisations which in turn invites comparison to the self and to the organisation. As discussed in section (2.3.1), employees work under different bodies with multi systems of incentives and rewards could influence negatively the employees who have less incentives like the MOE. The researcher argues that the tendency to understand self-categorisation through relationships with in-group and out-group, with powerful versus powerless, and with dominant versus subordinate would enhance our understanding of selection processes in public organisations. SCT sees the self in a hierarchal context in which the self can be understood at a personal and a social level as well as the level of the self at subgroup and subordinate levels (Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000).

This study investigates employee identities interrelations in groups (either social group or organisational group) and how this could influence their perceptions of justice in selection processes. Therefore, one of the main strengths of using these social psychological theories is in focusing on groups and how they could influence group members' identities in their self-esteem and in their interrelations with in-group and out-group members.

This section was about the two theories: Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory. After investigating identity and relationship with in-group and out-group members, another perspective of investigating selection processes in this study is organisational justice. During the processes of selection, interaction takes place between employee and the panel of selection. Researchers believe that different types of organisational justice: distribution, procedural and interactional could influence employee perception of fairness. The employee validation and their perceptions of justice regarding selection processes have practical importance of how the employees evaluate the organisation's attractiveness, and the effect of ethical and legal issues on validity of the selection procedures. The link between the two social psychological theories and employees' perception of justice and validation of selection

procedures could lead to a deeper understanding of the selection processes. The next two sections focus on social validity theory and organisational justice.

3.7 Social Validity Theory

Social Validity Theory (SVT) is a theory that assesses the relationship between what is objectively measured, how procedures are socially appropriated and how it is perceived by its consumers. In other words, SVT is predicated on the acceptability of the selection procedures by the employees in the organisation (Wolf, 1978). Wolf (1978) proposed that SVT should answer three questions:

1. What are the specific goals of these procedures?
2. Do the ends justify the means? Do employees feel the procedures are acceptable?
3. Are the employees satisfied with the results?

SVT focuses on assessment of the selection procedures by asking the employees to express their opinions of these procedures. Moreover, it is believed that the data from the assessment, can be used as the basis for intervention for the current selection procedures or planning and modifying the future ones (Truxillo, Bauer, & Garcia, 2017).

Schuler, Farr, and Smith (2013) investigates how selection processes influence employees socially using SVT. He investigates the positive and negative perception of employees during selection processes in four aspects: available information about the job and organisation; opportunity to practice knowledge and skills; transparency of the tools and processes during selection; and the feedback of their results. The main ideas of SVT agreed with the organisation justice which will discussed in detail in the next section (3.8) of this chapter.

Baer, Wolf, and Risley (1987) proposed the term ‘social invalidity’ to describe the opposite direction where employees have disapproved of the selection procedures. Crucially, this disapproval could lead to withdrawing from the selection/application process, complaining

to the media or encouraging others to withdraw from the process. The study will explore if there is social invalidation takes place in the internal selection in the MOE. The next section explores the last main concept of this study: organisational justice(OJ). The section will explore OJ through the three types of justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice.

3.8 Organisational Justice

Employees evaluate how fair the organisation selection procedures are, which in turn influences how they react toward the organisation. To begin with, organisational justice (Kolarić & Radojčić,2011) focuses on the perceived fairness of placed organisational or decision outcomes (distributive justice). After that, a further dimension concerns the fairness of procedures to make these decisions (procedural justice). Greenberg (1990) added a third dimension focussing on the interpersonal relationships during the selection procedures (interactional justice). Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng (2001) believe that another dimension of informational justice should be added.

According to (Lamont, 2017; Gilliland, 1994) distributive justice reactions and employee reactions towards selection processes should be considered as these reactions have impacts on individuals as well as organisational outcomes. McCarthy *et al.*, (2017) found that participants reactions has huge influence on the employees' attitudes and behaviours. In addition, Ayim Gyekye and Haybatollahi (2014) propose that employees' attitudes are influenced by the perceived fairness of the organisational procedures. These perceptions of fairness affect their judgements of how trustworthy the organisation is and whether it uses standardized criteria to treat all employees in the organisation. Moreover, several researchers (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Jones & Martens, 2009) have found positive relationships between perceptions of justice and organisational commitment, citizenship, job performance and job satisfaction.

Organisational justice in Arab countries has been examined through different aspects such as job satisfaction, loyalty to the organisation, commitment to the organisation, and identification with the organisation; however, none of these studies related justice with selection procedures, which is one of the gaps in knowledge that this study is investigating. Abu Zaid (2019) examined the relationship between organisational justice and job satisfaction, the findings show there is a positive relationship between distributive, procedural and interactional justice and job satisfaction. Al Hasnah (2019) investigated the practises of school principals from justice perspective and its relationship to organisational loyalty from teachers' perceptions at Bisha Governorate. The study found a relationship between the practises and organisation loyalty. A study by Shama and Al Shufan (2018) investigated the relationship between procedural justice and the organisational commitment from teachers' perspectives in the Nagaf region. The study also found a positive relationship between the procedural justice and organisational commitment.

In comparison with employees' perception about justice, it can be argued that justice is actually limited to self-interest where employees compare the perceived justice with the outcomes and status gained from the organisation. However, it can be argued that employees have a universal definition of justice and researchers have found that employees automatically have a response to justice even if they are not the victims of certain acts (Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006).

There is a debate about how many dimensions of justice should be adopted. Some studies have found that the three dimensions (procedural, informational, and interpersonal) have different correlations with justice and emphasize the variance in fairness perceptions. Other researchers argue that PJ subsumes all interpersonal and quality dimensions and there is no need to separate them (Gilliland, 1993). This study would use: procedural, distribution and

interactional as the researcher believes that these types cover all aspects of organisational justice which agrees with the aims of this study.

3.8.1 Distributive Justice

Distributive Justice (Dhawi & Jr, 2007) depends on Adam's equity theory (1965) which refers to the employees' perception of the equity income distribution based on the input and outcomes with comparison of others (Lamont, 2017; Colquitt, Scott, Judge, & Shaw, 2006). In the selection processes, Gilliland (1994) explained that that employees perceive the equity in distributive justice as a balance between hiring expectations and outcome of hiring decisions. Forret and Sue Love (2008) believe that the evaluation of inequity distribution will lead to negative emotions combined with perceptions of unfairness that would affect their attitudes about the organisation and create sense of dissatisfaction between the employees. Johnson, Holladay, and Quinones (2009) asserted that DJ is accounted as an important predictor of organisational citizenship behaviour as the perception of unfairness prevented them from the social activities in the organisation. Moreover, Basar and Sigri (2015) suggested an important link between DJ and leaving the job to avoid inequity in the workplace. On the other hand, however, fairness of outcomes is a signal of appreciation of employees' production and abilities.

Ko and Hur (2014) suggested that employees perceive fairness where their contributions are valued by engaging positively in the changes in the organisation. Employees' perception of unfairness in selection procedure could lead them not to apply for these positions. This is one of the areas that this study is investigating: how perceptions of unfairness could prevent employees applying for supervisory positions. This agrees with the concept of social invalidity where employees show their dissatisfaction of selection processes by withdrawing applications or even not applying at all for positions.

3.8.2 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice (PJ) is concerned with the perception of fairness of the procedures used in selection processes (Gilliland, 1993). The main focus of PJ is on the procedures rather than the outcomes. PJ focuses on the social exchange relationships rather than outcomes. It is argued that employees evaluate the social interaction during the selection processes and try to find out how social aspects such as status and dignity are perceived during the selection processes (Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Moliner, 2006). However, Moon, Kamdar, Mayer, and Takeuchi (2008) define PJ from another perspective which involves employees' ability to participate in the selection processes and the objectivity of the processes. In other words, PJ is the extent to which the selection procedures are fair from employees' perspective. This involves employees' participation with their views before decisions are made and before the top managers use the policies in the selection procedures. Moreover, He, Zhu, and Zheng (2014) suggested an important link between PJ and employees' commitment to the organisation.

According to Gilliland (1993) and Greenberg (1990) PJ can be summarised in two categories: formal characteristics; and explanation. Formal characteristics include job-relatedness, opportunity to perform, opportunity for reconsideration, and consistency of administration. Employees need feedback about selection processes which gives them honest and reliable information.

Job relatedness refers to the probability of how relevant the content of a measure is to the job (a matter of both content validity and face validity) but it can also involve considerations of predictive validity (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). Face validity refers to the employee's judgment of the relationship between selection procedure and content of the job and whether the former clearly relates to the latter (Gilliland, 1993). Content validity similarly refers to relevance of the content to selection procedures but to a more detailed extent. Some researchers

believe that face validity and predictive validity are most likely related in some respects but are still distinguishable (Heale and Twycross, 2015). In contrast, other studies suggest that in some respects face validity and predictive validity are interchangeable (Lievens, Dam, & Anderson, 2002). Basically, in the context of our discussion predictive validity reflects an assessment or judgement of how well the selection procedures predict future performance on the job.

The acceptability of selection procedures may be affected by low perceived levels of job-relatedness which consequently reduce the validity of the selection instruments especially if they involve some form of formal testing (Madigan & Macan, 2005). Highhouse, Doverspike, and Guion (2015) argue that this is because cognitive ability tests require a great deal of effort and that this negatively affected reactions of applicants who consequently ranked them less favourably in test among other types of tests.

Opportunity to perform refers to the opportunity to demonstrate an applicant's abilities, knowledge and skills in the selection processes (Ispas, Ilie, Iliescu, Johnson, & Harris, 2010).

3.8.3 Interactional Justice

Interactional Justice (IJ) was originally described by Bies and Moag (1986). It focuses on employees' judgments of the interactional components during the selection procedures. In 1990, Greenberg divided IJ into two parts: interpersonal justice; and informational justice. Interpersonal justice refers to respect, honesty, and politeness, whereas informational justice refers to adequacy of information, clarity of communication, and usefulness of feedback during the selection processes (Colquitt, *et al.*, 2001).

This section of narrative literature discusses culture, power, social psychological theories and organisational justice. The next section is about systematic review to explore the previous research in the same area

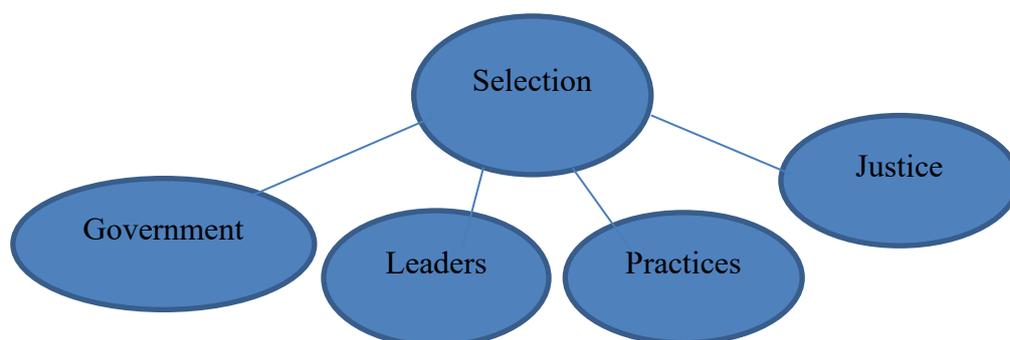
3.9 Systematic Literature Review

The previous section of the literature review was a narrative account of studies related to the theoretical part of the study to link selection on one hand and social psychological theories and justice on the other hand. In this part, the systematic literature review focuses on the previous studies in the same area of this study to demonstrate the gap that this study aims to investigate. A research strategy was adopted to cover all studies regarding selection with the main concepts of the study.

3.9.1 The Keywords

The first step of the systematic review was to combine the main concept of the study ‘selection’ with the other main concepts and alternatives for each concept in the place of the study Sultanate of Oman.

FIGURE 3.2 The Keywords of the systematic review



These alternatives had been chosen for difference of terminology used between Arabic and English. Some of these concepts have different meaning in English but in Arabic it is used to refer to the same concept with different word. **Table (3.1)** demonstrates the alternatives for the main concepts of the study.

Table 3.1 Concepts alternatives

The concept	Alternatives
Selection	Appointing
Government	Public ministries, civil service

Supervisory positions	Leaders, managers, head of sections, middle management
Practices	Strategies, ways, methods

3.9.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were determined by the main of the study which is to investigate what is known about selection in supervisory positions in public organisations in Oman.

Table 3.2 the selection criteria which were followed in this review.

Selection Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Geographical area	Arab countries	Other countries
Language	Arabic and English	Other languages
Search in	Complete thesis and journal articles	Articles (abstracts only)
Terms of Interest	Selection, recruitment & appointing, employment	Training & other HR areas
Type of employees	Current employees	New employees
Study design	Any design	

3.9.3 The Sources

3.8.3.1 English thesis and articles:

1. Search engine at University of Dundee Library, UK.
2. EThOS data base for theses in United Kingdom.
3. Google Scholar used to cover more results in the area.
4. ERIC The Education Resource Information Centre which provides wide range of articles in education.

3.8.3.2 Arabic thesis and articles

1. Sultan Qaboos University Library, the Sultanate of Oman.

2. Nizwa University Master thesis data base.
3. Electronic data base *Dar Al Mandumah* which included data bases such as Edusearch, Ecolink, and dissertations.

The next section shows the findings of the systematic review, followed by a discussion of the findings. The discussion will be divided into two parts: Omani studies and Arab studies.

3.9.4 Results and Discussion

Table 3.3 Final list of studies related to the research

	Title	Author/s	Publication year	Nature of study	Number of sample	Tools [data collection]	Place [data collection]	Country
1	The teachers' and headmasters' views of criteria used in the selection of school headmasters in Jordan	Mohammed Khair Al Khalili	1991	Masters	222	Survey	Public sector	Jordan
2	Administrative leaders in the Jordanian public universities attitudes towards the appointment of women in leadership positions at universities	R'dah Al Khateeb	1998	Journal	45	Survey	Public sector	Jordan
3	Factors affecting the selection processes and appointment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Civil Service: An empirical study of the trends of managers	Abdullah Saad Al Shri	2002	Masters	250	Survey	Public sector	Saudi Arabia
4	The Standard criteria adopted for the selection of public schools' headmasters from the viewpoint of headmasters and supervisors	Ali Abdullah Bani Khalid	2002	Masters	326	Survey	Public sector	Jordan
5	Equal Employment Opportunity in Public Office in Principle and	Rashid M Al Ghailani	2005	PhD	250	Survey and Interviews	Public sector	Oman

	Title	Author/s	Publication year	Nature of study	Number of sample	Tools [data collection]	Place [data collection]	Country
	Practice: an Empirical Study of the Omani Civil Service							
6	The impact of the selection and appointment of employees on the performance of companies in the agricultural sector in Libya: A Case Study of Machinery and transactions and agricultural inputs: from 1999 to 2005	Saleh Ali Kasheem	2005	Masters	100	Survey	Public sector	Libya
7	Developing Criteria and methods of selection of Middle management at Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman	Shamsa Mohammed Salem Al Badi	2006	Masters	250	Survey	Public sector	Oman
8	Influence of Appointing Public Employees In the achievement of Administrative Development in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Hamed Mohammed Al Amaira	2006	PhD	NA	Content analysis	Public sector	Jordan
9	Evaluation selection and appointment procedures of administrators working in the International Relief Agency in the Gaza Strip	Mohammad Al Zarabi	2006	Masters	152	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip

	Title	Author/s	Publication year	Nature of study	Number of sample	Tools [data collection]	Place [data collection]	Country
10	Develop selection criteria of UNRWA schools' headmasters in Gaza from the viewpoint of supervisors, managers and teachers	Nabeel Abdullah Zaqout	2007	Masters	386	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip
11	The reality of the selection and recruitment policies in management positions in the ministries of the Palestinian National Authority in the Gaza Strip	Majed Mohammed Al Afra and Mohammed Al Zanouon	2008	Journal	332	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip
12	Compliance of post managers' promotion criteria and its impact on postal services standards in the Gaza Strip	Mohammed Yuosf Al Sabah	2008	Masters	99	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip
13	The reality of the selection and appointment policies in administrative posts in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the Palestinian Gaza Strip and its impact on organisational loyalty policies	Ehab Abdullah Garoun	2009	Masters	179	Survey (plus one interview)	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip
14	Supervisors' criteria selection from the perspective of leaders,	Mohammed Ibrahim Al Qadah	2009	Journal	183	Survey	Public sector	Jordan

	Title	Author/s	Publication year	Nature of study	Number of sample	Tools [data collection]	Place [data collection]	Country
	supervisors and headmasters of high schools in Jordan							
15	Municipalities Balqa Governorate officials in Jordan attitudes towards the election and appointment to the municipal councils	Mohammed Abu Fares	2010	Journal	176	Survey	Public sector	Jordan
16	Developing supervisors' selection criteria at the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Mauof Sabti Al Anzi	2010	PhD	323	Survey	Public sector	Saudi Arabia
17	The reality of selection and appointment and its impact on the career path on bank employees at Gaza Strip	Munier Zakria Adwan	2011	Masters	187	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip
18	The Degree of Applying Educational Criteria in Selecting Gifted Schools Principals From The Teachers' And Specialists' viewpoint In The Ministry Of Education In Jordan.	Yaseen Khudair Al Janabi	2011	Masters	223	Survey	Public sector	Jordan
19	The criteria development for supervisors' selection in light of the experiences in some countries	Eman Ali Musleh	2011	Masters	132	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip

	Title	Author/s	Publication year	Nature of study	Number of sample	Tools [data collection]	Place [data collection]	Country
20	Recruitment procedures in the municipalities of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia	Mohammed Jamil Al Zaneen	2012	Masters	50	Survey	Public sector	Palestine Gaza Strip
21	The impact of the selection and appointment on the performance of the Sudanese insurance policies	Yusuf Abdel Rahman	2012	PhD	50	Survey (multiple regression techniques)	Private sector	Sudan
22	The impact of the selection and appointment system on Organisational creativity in the Jordanian Ministry of Interior in the period 2006–2012	Hana Uwada Al Shushan	2012	Masters	48	Survey	Public sector	Jordan
23	Recruitment and Selection in Saudi Arabia: A Case Study from King Faisal Specialist Hospital	Kahlid Ahmed Al Shquairi	2013	Masters	15	Survey	Private sector	Saudi Arabia
24	Developing the Middle Management selection policy at Ministry of sports Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman	Khadeeja Mohammed Salem Qutan	2015	Masters	120	Survey	Public sector	Oman

At first the findings of the research considered 44 sources: 20 were excluded and 24 were agreed within the inclusion criteria. The number of findings demonstrates the scarcity of academic studies in selection practices, to which this study would be a contribution. Four out of 44 studies were conducted in Oman; three of these three were included and one was excluded because it was abstract only which does not agree with inclusion criteria.

3.9.4.1 Omani studies

The findings show that the three Omani studies included in **Table 3.3** were about the public sector in Oman. Al Badi's study (2006) which was about developing criteria and methods of selection of middle management at the MOE is the most relevant to this study as both studies are concerned with selection procedures, middle management and the MOE. Al Badi's study had been conducted 10 years ago, but since then many new strategies have been adopted by the Government to develop HR practices in Oman. The findings of this study compared to Al Badi's findings could offer a baseline and could be an indication of improvement in this area. Al Badi's study investigated selection through leadership theories whereas this study will investigate selection processes through social psychological theories, power relationships and organisational justice related to the perception of justice within the MOE. The samples in the first study focus only on the governorates and did not include departments in central office itself whereas this study will include all departments either in the central office or governorates. It is worth mentioning that Al Badi's study focused on middle management only; however, the samples in this study will include the three main administrative groups: senior staff; middle management; and junior staff. The tool which was used to collect the 2006 data was a survey whereas this study will use mixed methods to collect the data.

The second and most recent study was in 2015 (Qutan 2015). This was about developing the middle management selection policy at the Ministry of Sports Affairs (MSA). The Ministry of Sports Affairs constituted the new and smallest ministry in the Government.

The total number of employees in the MSA was 754 comparing to 83,255 employees in the MOE. The organisational structure between the two ministries would not be readily comparable even though the two ministries follow the same civil service law of selection. However, the results of this study can be compared to Qutan's 2015 findings as indications of selection procedures between small and big public organisations in Oman. Qutan's sample group and the tool were the same as Al Badi (2006) where the sample only focussed in middle management, avoiding other groups in administrative structure, and the only tool used was a survey.

The oldest study considered was Al-Ghailani's study in 2005 about equal employment opportunity in public offices in Oman. The study investigated recruitment and selection in government ministries that followed the civil service law. The samples of the study (Al-Ghailani 2005) included nine ministries; the MOE was within the sample. However, the number of the MOE participants was only 37 out of 250 from other ministries. Comparing the total number of employees in the MOE (which was approximately 60,000 in 2004) with that sample size (less than one per cent) brings into question the feasibility of generalizing from the findings of the study to all the MOE employees. One relevant area between this study and Al Ghailani's study is the cultural influence in selection procedure. Al-Ghailani (2005) found nepotism and favouritism was widely adopted in selection procedures, which gives this study the opportunity to investigate whether these practices are still used in public institutions. Therefore, for the similarities between this research and Al-Ghailani's study in (2005), the findings of this study will be compared to Al-Ghailani's findings only to investigate if these practices still exist in public organisations and its relation to employees' perceptions of justice in these organisations.

3.9.4.2 Arabic studies

From the table of findings, it is obvious that most of the studies were in the public sector and rely on surveys as the main tool for collecting the data. Even though some studies used interviews with surveys (for example Garoun 2009 and Al Shquairi 2013), the number of participants in these studies did not exceed two in either study, a low number compared with the potential participants. Furthermore, the findings reveal the scarcity of academic studies into selection procedures especially in Oman and in the Gulf countries. This could be due to the languages used in my search: I used just English and Arabic, whereas some Arab countries (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) often use French in their academic research. This limits my study but nevertheless it can be counted as a contribution to the knowledge of approaches to selection in Oman in particular and to the other Gulf Arab countries and other Arab countries by extension.

This research is distinct from other studies in one particular aspect. Some of these studies investigate selection regarding performance of employees, career path, and services: however, none of these studies investigate selection procedures through social psychological theories linking with organisational justice. I suggest therefore that the findings of my current study may therefore make a unique contribution to the understanding the selection policies and procedures from a social psychological and organisational justice perspective.

As illustrated in **Figure 3.1** Power perception and relationships together with social psychological theories, and justice forms the basis of this study. The relationship between identity, culture and power interacted with each other. Power is the social space where culture, organisation and identity are shaped, interact. This interaction moves from macro level (society) to micro level (organisation) in the society. Power and culture addresses the organisational conditions that influence selection processes and social psychological theories define and demonstrate the processes of identity formation. Identities are structured

accordingly to social status and power perception and relationships in the society. The organisation is part of the society and all of the self-perception, and interactions in the society are reflected in group and out group relationships. This study looks at the suitability of using social psychological theories to determine how employee identity and group membership influences perception regarding selection processes. Tyler (2000) asserts that the power of justice influences employee feelings and perceptions in culture and organisation as well. Therefore, linking identity and group membership would highlight group's role in employee perception of validating justice in selection processes in the MOE. Moreover, adapting organisational justice to explore all steps were taken by the MOE in internal selection and its relationship to employees' perceptions of justice.

3.10 Gaps of the study

The findings of the literature in internal selection show that most of the studies relating to internal selection the focus on one or two managerial levels. This study would focus on the three administrative levels: senior, middle and junior staff. Moreover, while most of the studies rely on questionnaires only, this study will use mixed methods, questionnaires and interviews, to collect the data of this study. None of the previous literature discusses the influence of the social context on employees' perception, therefore this study will investigate the impact of social factors, power, group membership and national culture, on employees' perceptions of internal selection. Finally, none of the literature investigates the tools, feedback or timeline of the internal selection; this study will investigate all steps in the internal selection and their relations to employees' perceptions of internal selection.

3.11 Research questions

After reviewing the literature about the culture, social psychological theories, social validity, and organisational justice with regarding to selection processes, this study addresses the following research questions:

- 1. How are the internal selection procedures perceived by the senior staff, middle management, and junior staff?**
 - A. How do the employees evaluate the internal selection process? Do they believe that these procedures create fairness and justice?
 - B. Is there a sense of nepotism and favouritism in the internal selection process?

- 2. What are the most important factors influencing internal selection processes in public organisations in Oman?**
 - A. Do the cultures (national-organisational) influence employees' perceptions of justice?
 - B. Is there a relationship between employees' characteristics (gender-work status-work experience-qualification) and their perception of organisational justice?
 - C. Is any pressure used to select candidates? (Internal and external environment)?

- 3. What is the nature of the relationship between employees' identity and group membership within power perception in culture and organisation in relation to internal selection processes?**
 - A. Do employees prefer in-group or out-group nominations for the positions?
 - B. Do they believe that there is a dominant group (elite families-elite officers) that can influence the internal selection procedure?
 - C. Is there an influence of social power in the internal selection processes?

D. How do power relationships influence employees' perception of justice in internal selection?

4. From employees' perspectives, which type of organisational justice has more influence on internal selection processes?

A. How do employees perceive the three types of the organisational justice?

B. How do the candidates evaluate: tools for internal selection processes, the timeline of the processes, feedback, and information during the processes?

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the literature of the main concepts related to selection processes addressed by this research. The chapter started with a definition of selection, internal selection, employees' perceptions and tools of internal selection. Then, the concept of culture is introduced followed by definition of organisational culture and national culture. Then, power was introduced to define the relationship between identity and culture. After that, the two social psychological theories were presented (social identity theory and self-categorization theory) and used to illustrate how individual perceptions could be developed and influenced starting with how individuals evaluate themselves through self-categorization theory, then how the group can influence individuals through social identity theory.

The chapter presented social validity theory and organisational justice and how employees evaluate the trustworthiness of the organisation during the selection processes. The literature in this chapter does not give straightforward account of the main concepts with selection processes in Oman and Arab countries. Instead, it shows how culture and perception of identity with in-group and out-group could affect perceptions about selection processes. The key issue here is to determine how the cultures shaped our identities in the first place, then how this identity valued itself and within small group like organisation or big group like the country.

Through individual's perception, everything is valued according his/her perceptions.

The second part of the literature review was about searching the previous studies in selection in Arab countries and find the gaps which this study could contribute to the knowledge in this area.

The next chapter is about the research methodology. The chapter will start with the theoretical background and the design of the study. Then, the research approaches are introduced as well as the research tools used in the research.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework of this study establishes that organisations are influenced by power either at a micro or macro level. The identities of the employees are structured by an understanding of power and by the way this understanding influence identity and its relationship to ingroup and outgroup members. Moreover, the framework includes employees' perception of justice during the selection processes. These relationships are explored in the literature review, which prompted the need to investigate the framework in order to test it and uncover its limitations and relevance. Therefore, this chapter will introduce the research methodology of this study which includes steps carried out in the field to fulfil the study's aims and objectives.

The chapter firstly introduces the theoretical background, which includes the ontological and epistemological positions of this study. The research design is explained, followed by an exploration of approaches to research. Then the chapter outlines the research methods to be used and justifies the usefulness of these methods in relationship to the central research question. The structure of the sections in the chapter follows three stages: pre-field, field and post-field. The pre-field includes designing, piloting and sampling. The field stage includes steps in the implementation of each instrument. The post-field includes the techniques used to analyse the data. In the pre-field there is a detailed description of each instrument of the study, which includes the design of the instrument, piloting the instrument and the reliability and validity of each instrument. Then, the sample of the study is explained, followed by ethical approval of the study. The field stage includes the steps carried out to implement each instrument. Finally, the post-field stage includes the techniques that will be used to analyse the data

4.2 Theoretical background and the design of the study

Research involves the researcher's philosophical assumptions of reality and knowledge which will guide the choices of research design and research methods for collecting and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013). The methodological design depends on the researcher's beliefs and views on the nature of the world (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology) (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013). This study combines the two ontological positions: objectivism and constructivism. Objectivism holds that reality is out there in the social world and that the researcher should discover that reality using scientific methodology (Gray, 2016). In other words, objectivism states that social entities are out there and independent from human interpretations. In this study a survey is used to seek answers as to whether there are differences between participants regarding gender, academic qualifications, positions, work experience, and relating to whether or not they apply for a job. On the other hand, constructivism suggests that humans construct and interpret their (social) reality (Amineh and Asl, 2015). In other words, constructivism states that reality is constructed through human understandings and interpretations; therefore, in this study, such constructions are measured by the interviews. The reason for combining the two positions is to gain a comprehensive view of the status of HR practices in public organisations in Oman.

This leads to the epistemological approach of the study, which is important for the research because it clarifies the research design; the design, in turn, encompasses the nature of evidence, the places to collect data and the method of interpreting the data (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). The researcher follows a pragmatic paradigm which depends on adopting the proper research methods, an analysis which suits the research questions, and the use a range of sources to understand them. Besides this, the philosophical assumption of pragmatism is regarded as a tool of problem-solving rather than a description or mirror of reality (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, this researcher adopts a mixed methods approach which suits the pragmatic

paradigm, in which the research questions can be interpreted in different ways rather than by focusing on a single approach. For example, using mixed methods rather than adopting a wholly qualitative approach enables exploration of the different realities of the research questions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

This study investigates employees' perceptions of the selection processes in the MOE. It investigates how external factors such as culture, identity, group membership and power relationships could influence employees' values and beliefs about justice in the selection processes. The epistemology of this study requires the use of multiple approaches to explore the selection processes in the MOE. That is why the pragmatic paradigm is used in this study to explore these processes. The pragmatic paradigm suits this study, which investigates, on the one hand, the processes as well as personal experiences at different hierarchical levels in the MOE, and on the other hand the employees' views and beliefs about the selection processes in the MOE. Furthermore, the pragmatic paradigm influences this study's literature review and data collection. The epistemology of this study coheres with the pragmatic approach because it investigates the meaning of the world as seen by employees in various positions in the MOE, their social status, and how these factors could influence justice validation in the selection processes.

The research questions of this study concern the current practices of selection for supervisory positions in the MOE. Creswell (2013) believes that the pragmatic researcher depends on the questions of the study and finds multiple approaches with which to answer them. In the process of answering these questions, it is necessary to set the meaning from the standpoint of the selection practices, and then to look at different stages of culture, identity, group membership and power, to gain an in-depth understanding of these practices in the MOE. Adopting the pragmatic approach will help the researcher to use mixed methods to explore these stages. For example, investigating employees' perceptions of the selection processes

required many participants; therefore, a quantitative approach is used to explore their perceptions. Research question three – what is the nature of the relationship between employees' identity and group membership within power perception in culture and organisation, with regard to selection processes? – which explores identity, group membership and power relationships, requires adoption of a qualitative approach, consisting of talking to participants to investigate their perceptions of the selection practices. Accordingly, adopting a pragmatic approach will help the researcher to meet the aims of this research by enabling diverse ways of answering its questions. Creswell (2013) states that adoption of a pragmatic approach with mixed methods opens the way to different methods of research as well as of collection and analysis of the data. Therefore, I realized that the mixed methods approach was the best one for answering the research questions, as will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 Research Approaches

This study follows a mixed methods approach which starts from the assumption that combining quantitative and qualitative data provide a deeper understanding of the research questions (Creswell, 2013). According to the findings of the systematic literature review, most previous studies have mainly adopted quantitative approaches. Brannen (2017) believes that combining quantitative and qualitative methods can give the researcher more confidence in the findings and thus make the inferences of the sample of the study more accurate and realistic. Collis and Hussey (2013) agree that a combination of survey and interview in HR studies is used to gain in-depth understanding of HR practices in organisations. Therefore, this study utilises two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, and more than one method of data collection. Web survey and interview are used to collect the data, with a triangulation design used to overcome the weaknesses of adopting one method only.

The triangulation design is the most common practice in the mixed methods approach, which uses more than one method to study a research problem. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), triangulation helps to minimise the weaknesses, biases and limitations of adopting only one method and enhances the results of the study. Furthermore, Cohen *et al.* (2013) argue that triangulation can be extended not only to methods but also to “space triangulation” and “combined level triangulation”. The space level of triangulation depends on triangulating the data from different places inside the country and comparing these groups. Combined level triangulation involves the levels of identity, the group and the organisation. This study investigates different groups – senior staff, middle management and junior staff – in different parts of the MOE and the governorates, regarding their perception of selection processes in the MOE. The design of this study intends to use the web survey to gather data about the general perspective of fairness in the selection processes, and the interviews to provide more detailed and specific information about the employees’ perception of selection processes in the MOE. In the next two sections I will describe in detail each tool and justify its use in the study.

4.4 Research methods

In this study, I used two methods to collect the data: web surveys and interviews. Cohen *et al.* (2013) believe that there is no perfect or standard way to carry out research. Kothari (2004) argue that researchers should look for the techniques which are appropriate for the sample and can gather information at the lowest cost. However, Gillham (2008) argues that a good research should be built on a good data collection technique. In the next section, I will justify using web survey and interviews in my study.

4.4.1 Surveys

This study’s purpose is to investigate employees’ perceptions of selection processes in the MOE. The web survey is one of the tools used to gather data for the study.

A survey is a systematic method of collecting data by presenting the targeted participants with a patterned set of questions which can measure the opinions and experiences examined by the research questions under study by analysing them quantitatively (Arora, 2017). Cohen *et al.* (2013) argue that surveys can cover a large geographical area in a short time, compared to other tools. This study investigates the views of employees in different governorates, for which purpose survey can be the best data collection tool. This study benefited from the advantages of using survey: for example, collecting data in a short time, covering a huge number of participants, lower cost, and the participants' feeling of comfort because of their details not being identified (Creswell, 2013).

4.4.1.1 Web Survey

Web survey mode can be defined as using the World Wide Web to collect data from the participants of the study. It is self-administered survey and can be accessed via the web, the participants using laptops, desktops, and smartphones, tablets or smart TVs to enter their answers to the survey questions (Callegaro, Manfreda, & Vehovar, 2015). Compared to paper-based surveys, web survey allows researchers to design, distribute and analyse the survey while expending less time, cost and effort. Moreover, Börkan (2010) argues that using web survey allows the researcher to reach all the different groups needed to gather the data for the research, which would be difficult using paper surveys. Besides that, the online survey gives more space for participants to express their views freely, especially when it concerns their judgements of justice in the MOE.

Although web survey has advantages, it also places limitations on the research, especially in three areas: the probability of sampling, the response rate and the quality of data. However, Callegaro *et al.* (2015) argue that probability of sampling depends on the penetration of internet among the sample of the study.

In this study, for the purpose of benefiting from the advantages and avoiding the limitations of the web survey, the researcher designed the web survey in such a way as to encourage employees to participate in the study. The next section describes the design of the survey in detail.

4.4.1.2 Designing the web survey

When I designed the web survey for the study, I made sure of addressing different issues, such as the web survey being self-administered and completed by participants themselves without any support from the researcher. This implies the need to use simple and direct words in the survey so that the participants can understand it clearly without any help. Moreover, the context in which the survey takes place should be acknowledged and caution exercised in regard to questions about items which might make participants uncomfortable, leading them to withdraw or decline to participate in the survey: for example, personal preferences that the participant would not want to share with the researcher.

In this study, I used closed-ended questions to encourage the participants to answer the survey. Cohen *et al.* (2013) support the view that closed-ended questions influence people positively to participate in the survey. Similarly, Denzin (2017) believes that closed-ended questions suit surveys and open-ended questions suit interviews, allowing the researcher to obtain deep and unexpected answers for the study.

I developed a survey which consists of three sections: the first section is about demographic information; the second section is about selection processes, and the third section is about organisational justice. In constructing the questions, I tried to avoid leading questions, and used simple words, language which is suitable and understandable for employees, and a logical and clear ordering of the questions (Callegaro *et al.*, 2015). I used closed questions in the survey in the form of multiple choice, the Likert scale and ranking order (see **Table 4.1**).

Table 4.1 The items in the survey

Section	Questions	Items	Type of Question
1- Demographic information	6	Gender- work experience- Position- Academic Qualification, work location, and have you applied for position	Multiple choice
2- A-Selection processes	36	Employees' perception of selection processes	Likert Scale
B-Responsibility for candidates' perceptions of selection processes	1	Ranking items of the responsibility for candidates' perceptions of selection processes	Ranking order
3- Organisational justice	28	Applicants' evaluation of organisational justice in the MOE	Likert Scale

A copy of the survey was sent to the supervisors for their feedback; after that, the survey was passed to colleagues from the same school for them to give their feedback on it. The sample of this study is employees in the MOE who are English is not their first language, therefore, I had to translate the survey from English to Arabic. I followed the World Health Organisation's (WHO, 2018) translation protocol which includes the following steps:

- 1- Forward translation
- 2- Expert panel
- 3- Back translation
- 4- Pre-testing
- 5- Final version

Following this protocol, I translated the survey from English to Arabic. Then, I sent the survey to the expert panel, comprising two Omani lecturers in the Technical College in Ibri, who teach English as a second language. After they gave their feedback on the translation,

another expert in the Arabic language was given the survey to check for grammatical mistakes and on the ease and relevance of terms used in the survey. The third step consisted of translating the survey back to English by a lecturer in TESOL (Teaching English as a second language) in Rustaq Education College in Oman; and the fourth step was checking the suitability of the survey by a pilot study. After getting this feedback, the final survey was distributed to the study sample.

4.4.1.3 Piloting the survey

The pilot study in social studies is used in preparation for the main study. In it, the researcher pre-tests the instrument of the study as well as figuring out the best ways of distributing the survey (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). In this phase, the researcher makes decisions about keeping, rephrasing and deleting items in the survey (Ismail, Kinchin & Edwards, 2017). Twenty-one participants out of 40, or 52%, answered the survey. **Table (4.2)** shows participants according to position and **Table(4.3)** shows their gender.

Table 4.2 Positions of the participants in the pilot study

Name of the position	Number of the participants
Assistant General Director	1
Experts	2
Directors	2
Head of Section	4
Member	4
Specialist	4
Supervisor	2
Technician	1

An administrative	1
Total	21

Table 4.3 The gender of the participants in the pilot study

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	5	23,8%
Male	16	76,1%

I piloted the one way of inviting people to the survey by email. Emails are widely used for web survey invitations, though low responses to requests for participation in web surveys have been observed in the last decade, which could be explained by emails going into spam because of not being sent from the organisation's email address. As a result, in this study I made sure that all invitations were sent from training offices in the governorates (Callegaro *et al.*, 2015). Archer (2008) suggests that the researcher should use all existing resources to raise the participation rate and to deal with non-response errors. The non-response error takes place in a web survey when the link of the survey is not compatible with all browsers so that the respondents could not participate. I made sure that the URL link for the web survey was valid on all browsers (Chrome, Explorer and Firefox), and that all participants acknowledged that their internet browser was compatible with the web survey (Couper, 2008). De Bruijne and Wijnant (2014) found that personalised invitations, simpler web survey design, and follow-up reminders should increase the response rate to web surveys.

The invitations were sent by emails for the participants of the sample study. After a week, a reminder was sent to the sample of the pilot study. The second week another reminder was sent to the participants. The percentage increased from the first time 25% to 52% in the second reminder for the participants.

4.4.1.4 Reliability and Validity of the Survey

Creswell (2013) believes that reliability and validity help the researchers to effectively read the findings of the study. Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of results produced by the tool of the study. Reliability can be measured by different approaches: test-retest, parallel forms, Inter rater and internal consistency (Callegaro *et al.*, 2015). According to Bentler (2017), internal consistency is more flexible and appropriate than other criteria of reliability. Coefficient alpha, an estimator of internal consistency in a tool, contains multiple factors (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The survey reliability analysis was carried out by running a Cronbach's alpha test, which checks the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items in the survey. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale should be above 0.70 (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). The reliability of the survey was measured by dividing it into two sections. The first section (items 1-38) was for all participants and the second part was for those who applied for supervisory positions (items 39-67). The Cronbach's alpha was found to be reliable for both groups: for the first group, the first time it showed less than the accepted average (above 0.7). Therefore, I had to rephrase and delete some items, and then when the test was done it showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.781, which is above average. For the second group it showed 0.890.

Validity involves whether the survey measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell, 2013). Validity has different types: content, construct, and criterion-related evidence. The content validity concerns whether enough sampling of the content is measured. Construct validity refers to the suitability of the survey to measure what it should measure. Criterion-related evidence refers to comparison of the findings of the study with other findings (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). In this study, the validity of the survey was measured by content related evidence, which checks whether the content of the instrument is sufficient to represent what it

is supposed to represent. In addition, the content validation concerns the format of the survey (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

The survey was revised by the three experts who work in the MOE, and with reference to the comments of the participants in the pilot study. The format is considered for clarity of language and directions and the length of the survey. Cohen *et al.* (2013) argue that experts' revision of the survey improves its content validity. Most comments from the experts and participants were about the length of the survey and the clarity of some phrases. The survey was modified according to the results for validity and reliability as well as to the comments; eight items were deleted, 12 items were rephrased, and two new items were added to the survey. These changes in the survey were not significant for reapplying of the ethical approval of the survey, the amendments of the survey are in Appendix three. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) believe that the administration of the instrument helps researchers to draw accurate conclusions about the sample; therefore, I use one survey for all participants because two forms of the survey would confuse the respondents and could affect their participation. Some suggestions from participants were not included as not being applicable to the study. For example, one of the participants suggested using a Likert scale of three instead of five, and the rationale for selecting a five Likert Scale was explained to the participant. Appendix three shows the amendments to the survey following the pilot study.

4.4.2 Interview

Interviews are the second tool for collecting data in this study. The main goal of interviews in this study is to gather information by interviewing the employees on how they feel about and like their evaluation, and to understand their realities and perceptions of the selection practices in the MOE. The interviews in this study allowed the researcher to interact with interviewees and to ask for clarification of their responses.

In the interviews, I tried to ask the type of questions which reflect participants' opinions and feelings about the research questions. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) believe that interview is about exploring participants' feelings and thoughts about the research questions; what is demonstrated makes interview an important technique for collecting data. At the same time, the researcher ascertains which sensitive information participants want to share in the interview. For example, in one of the governorates, I interviewed a superior officer who told me about the selection processes, giving examples of employees who could not pass the central office interview. Later, I interviewed the applicant who did not pass the interview and it seemed that participant did not want me to know about having failed the central office interview, instead implying that the reference was to someone else who had not passed it. I realised that failing in the interview was sensitive information which the participant did not like to share with me, and I respected that during the interview.

In this study, open-ended questions were used in interviews, allowing some flexibility for requesting clarification of some responses and giving interviewees the chance to express their thoughts about matters they considered significant. The open-ended questions helped me to gain in-depth understanding by clarifying the questions to make sure the respondents understood them clearly (Cohen *et al.*, 2013).

The next step is deciding on the structure of the interviews, and in this study, they were semi-structured. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) believe that semi-structured interviews are the most frequently used technique in qualitative research. The important feature of this type is its flexibility, which enables the researcher to go into more depth by expanding on and following up participants' responses. In the interviews, I tried to evaluate the circumstances of the interview and personality of the interviewee, so that in some interviews I reordered, deleted, or added to the interview questions (King, Horrocks, & Brooks 2018). Adopting semi-structured interviews helped the interviews to go smoothly, as when, in some cases, this

researcher reordered the questions depending on participants' responses and at the same time the respondents added their views about selection practices. For each interview, a quiet place or office is selected, where respondents feel relaxed enough to express their views freely (King *et al.*, 2018). The participants are informed of the purpose of the study, the questions and the length of the interview.

Equally important, participants are provided with a guideline which tells them what is to be discussed as well as discovering important views of the respondents about the research, in aspects which were not clear to the researcher.

4.4.2.1 The validity and reliability of the interviews

A valid instrument is defined by the accuracy of the inferences that the researcher draws from the participants through use of an instrument; in other words, the instrument measures what it should measure. The collected data help the researcher to make accurate inferences from the study sample; therefore, the device or instrument should be accurate to allow the researcher to reach valid conclusions from the sample.

A reliable instrument gives the same results at different times. The instrument is required to produce consistent results through different periods, giving the researcher confidence that the results truly represent the sample of the study.

4.4.2.2 Piloting the interview

The interview was also piloted to ensure the suitability of the questions as well as the timing of the interviews. Three participants were interviewed in the pilot study. Two were male and one female, and they held different positions within the MOE, thus ensuring that the questions were suitable for different positions.

All interviews were recorded after permission to do so was gained from the participant. The interview for the three participants took place in the participants' office, in keeping with

their own choice of location which afforded privacy for the interview. I estimated one hour for the interview, which was enough for the three interviews. The interviews helped me to assess the interview techniques in relation to the timing of the interviews.

4.5 Sample of the study

Fraenkel, Norman and Hyun (2012) believe that sampling is one of the most important steps in research, in which the researcher makes sure that the study sample is representative of the population of the study. Likewise, Creswell (2013) argues that sampling spreads through all different stages of research, reflecting the importance of sampling in research. In this study, I used stratified random sampling for the survey and purposive sampling for the interviews, as will be described in detail in the next two sections.

4.5.1 Sample of the survey

Sampling in web survey includes list-based and non-list-based forms, the difference between the two being that with list-based sampling, all the population of the study is listed, and access is gained in advance of the study (Callegaro *et al.*, 2015). The availability and accessibility of internet for the whole sample of the study is essential in applying probability sampling for the web survey. In this study, all the population have access to the internet which enables the use of probability sampling and, therefore, generalisation of the findings to the study population.

Selection of the sample of the study includes three stages: identifying, approaching and recruiting. The researcher has taken certain steps to list the targeted population for this study. This leads to the sampling frame, which requires certain steps to be taken to identify the eligible participants in the survey population. Furthermore, I raised questions about the population to evaluate the quality of the data, such as whether the whole population was eligible for sampling,

and, if there were any strata among the participants, how much weight each stratum should be given in the sample.

Therefore, the first step was to identify the targeted population of the study. The population of the present study consisted of all Omani employees in the MOE in Oman who were eligible to apply for supervisory positions in the MOE. I sent an application to the MOE to get the database of all employees in the MOE. The second step was applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria to the database in an Excel sheet. Thus, an exclusion criterion was nationality, since only Omanis can apply for vacancies in supervisory positions. In other words, the CVL states that only Omanis can apply for supervisory positions in governmental institutions in Oman; therefore, all non-Omani are excluded from the database.

Another exclusion criterion is the right to apply for the supervisory positions. Accordingly, I excluded all positions for which people are not eligible to apply. In this study, I use stratified sampling so as to reduce selection bias. This study investigates employees' perceptions in the central office and different educational governorates, using stratified sampling that divides the participants into strata according to their workplace, which ensures that the sample reflects the population's characteristics (Creswell ,2013). Another advantage of stratified sampling is that it guarantees proper sampling from each subgroup of the population. In this study, all employees were distributed according to the place of work, the number of participants from the central office and governorates being selected according to the accumulated percentage of the sample. On the other hand, the main disadvantage of stratified sampling is that it requires certain conditions to be met before the sampling can be used. Being aware of this disadvantage and focusing on the quality of the data, I made sure that all participants were included in the sample, as well as taking the preliminary steps explained earlier in this section to investigate the quality of the data. **Table 4.4** shows the total number in each workplace and the number of participants in the study sample.

Table 4.4 Number of the target employees according to place of work and number of participants in the study sample

Place of work	Total of employees	Percentage	Number of participants
Dakhiliyah	846	9.4%	34
Dhahirah	521	5.8%	21
Wusta	167	2.1%	8
Batinah North	681	7.6%	28
Dhofar	918	10.3%	38
Musandam	210	2.4%	9
Buraimi	329	3.6	13
Sharqiyah North	690	7.7	28
Batinah South	1036	11.5	42
Sharqiyah South	580	6.5	24
Muscat	855	9.5	35
The central office	2111	23.6	87
Grand Total	8944	100	367

The sample size is crucial in determining the quality of the study's findings. Having said that, Al-Ghailani (2005) claims that literature provides no definite number for the number of participants in studies. Barlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) believe that sample size and non-response bias are fundamental in research; the sample size is important to establish the probability of the population and non-response bias is important because of participants who do not respond being included in the sample. Callegaro *et al.* (2015) argue that the quality of the sample depends on the precision reflected in the confidence interval, which is regularly 95%. According to Barlett *et al.* (2001), if the population size is 8000 and the margin of error is 0.5, the sample of the study should be 367, and 370 if it is 10000. The population of this study is 8944; therefore, the sample of this study is between 367 and 370. Therefore, the number target of participants was 370, when the invitations were sent by email the researcher

received 438 respondents, this means that the sample of this which will be analysed in the quantitative data in this study will be 438.

4.5.2 Sample of the interviews

I used purposive sampling to help achieve deep understanding as well as rich information in response to the research questions. Purposive sampling occurs when the researcher selects specific participants from the sample of the study. argue that purposive sampling is most widely used in qualitative studies (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2010). In the same vein, Creswell (2013) asserts that using purposive sampling helps in better understanding the questions of the study. The purposive sampling helped the researcher to include employees from different hierarchal levels which includes different views from all levels in the MOE.

According to Creswell (2013), the sample size in qualitative research depends on the type of study, the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the sample, and the extent of saturation that the researcher has reached. This means that for this study, which takes place in Oman where all governorates have same features and the homogeneity is high, taking samples of governorates would be enough for the study. Adopting this technique of purposive sampling helped me to reach all employees in different educational governorates. Along with different positions and genders, this diversity of participants' backgrounds would help in understanding the research questions more deeply.

Consequently, a sample of 32 participants was selected from the central office and five educational governorates: Muscat, Batinah North, Dakhiliyah, Buraimi, and Dhahirah. The reason for selecting these educational governorates was that, as mentioned earlier, selecting a sample of governorates depends on homogeneity and saturation such that the researcher feels that the sample covers the themes of the study. By contrast, Sechelski and Onwuegbuzie (2019) suggests that saturation should be proved by the researcher; in other words, researchers should

provide evidence of saturation in their studies. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) suggested a guideline for the numbers in qualitative research, based on the type of study, to overcome the saturation issue. As an illustration, Creswell (2013) suggested that the number of participants should vary from 5 to 30 according to the type of research, whereas Green and Thorogood (2009) found that 20 participants are enough for a study. The interview sample for this study is 32 participants, shown in **Table 4.5** according to their positions.

Table 4.5 Number of participants in the interviews

Position	Number of participants
Under Secretary	1
General Director	1
Assistant General Director	4
Experts	2
Head of Department	6
Assistant Head of Department	2
Head of Section	6
Other Positions	8
Total	32

4.6 Place of the research

This study took place in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The MOE was selected because it is my place of work and all my experience has been in the MOE, where I started as a teacher until reaching my current position as director assistant. Moreover, the MOE is one of the oldest ministries in the government as well as employing more than half of the employees who work under the Civil Service Law. In addition, the MOE educational governorates are spread all over the country, and so can provide a good indication of the variety of employees' views when evaluating the internal selection processes in different governorates in the Sultanate, though it must be kept in mind that one of the limitations of the study is its inclusion of employees only in the MOE, not in all ministries. Having said that, the employees in the MOE are a good sample of all Civil Service employees throughout the Sultanate for

investigating selection processes for supervisory positions. Choosing the MOE as the place of my study gave me dual roles as insider and outsider researcher, which is explained in detail in **section 4.7** on research ethics.

4.7 Ethical approval of the study

This study received two ethical approvals, the first from the School Research Ethics Committee (SREC) and the second from the MOE's technical office for studies and development, which oversees granting of approval for conducting studies in the MOE.

The application to the ethical committee in the school includes the study tool (web survey and interview questions) and the application form, which consists of the consent form and information sheet guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and describing all ethical procedures to be followed during data collection for the study. Then, after discussions with my supervisors, the ethical form was submitted to the School Research Ethics Committee (SREC). The committee asked for further clarification in the application; I provided all the clarification needed by the committee and gained its approval (**Appendix one**).

The next step was informing the academic supervisor in the embassy of the nature of the study, followed by a letter from the embassy to the MOE to support the researcher (**Appendix two**). Cohen *et al.* (2013) assert that obtaining permission from the organisation is an initial step in research. Therefore, I emailed the technical office for studies and development in the MOE to ask for approval of the study. The application for approval requires the approval letter from the school, a letter from the embassy, study tools (web survey and interview questions), the consent form and the information sheet, which includes assurance of the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The technical office required clarification of some items, so the researcher explained all unclear items. Following approval from the technical office, an email of the approval for conducting the study was sent by the

internal mailing system for all directorates either in the central office or the governorates. The pilot study took place in November 2017 followed by the main study from December 2017 to March 2018.

Another consent form was needed from the participants of the study. Cohen *et al.* (2013) believe that participants should be aware in advance of the nature of the study as well as completely understanding that their participation is on a voluntary basis and that they can withdraw at any time from either the survey or the interview. The participants in the survey were sent an invitation, including the actual invitation to participate and the number of the approval's correspondence in the internal mailing system regarding approval for conducting the study in the MOE.

The researcher's knowledge of the culture where the study is taking place and the characteristics of the participants increased participation in the study (Creswell, 2013). I believe that providing the number of the correspondence in the invitation gave the respondents additional encouragement to take part in the study because they felt more secure about participating in studies approved by the MOE.

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured for all participants whether in the survey or in the interview. Participants in the interviews were asked for permission to record the interview; when interviewing those who declined the recording, I took notes. These procedures were followed to make sure that the study adhered clearly to the guideline on research ethics in Dundee University.

The insider researcher is another aspect of research ethics. Milligan (2016) believe that the insider researcher has advantages such as better understanding of the culture of the study and has good relationships which enable him/her to discover the truth. On a related note, Smyth and Holian (2008) assert that the insider researcher has a deeper knowledge of how decisions

are made, the politics and hierarchy of the setting, and how to approach participants more quickly than an outside researcher could. On the other hand, Chavez (2008) argues that a researcher's familiarity with the organisation could lead to loss of objectivity. Also, Mercer (2007) argues that the insider researcher could influence participants through unequal power relationships making them feel obligated to participate either in the survey or in the interviews. The researcher followed different steps to mitigate bias in this study. From the beginning of the study the researcher discussed his history in the Ministry so the supervisors would be aware if there were any subjective influences through different stages of the research. The research takes place in the central office and eleven directorates; the researcher works in one of the directorates, but the central and other directorates do not have any idea of the identity of the researcher. All the invitations either for the survey or interviews were sent by training centres to avoid any personal influence on the results of the study, and all participants voluntarily participated in either the survey or interviews. In the interviews in the central office and directorates the researcher did not reveal his identity; however, for the participants who asked for information about the researcher before the interview, the information was provided to create trust and understanding between researcher and the participants.

On the contrary, I found that participants were more open to expressing their views about selection practices through realising that I was in the organisation. This could support Brunner's argument (2013) that Omani are unwilling to provide information to strangers, especially when it concerns evaluation of practices in a public organisation. I realised that I played a dual role as insider researcher to my governorate and outsider to other governorates and the central office. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2013) propose that the researcher should not avoid the definition of insider or outsider but should gain the relative advantages of these positions. The insider researcher has a huge influence in qualitative studies.

Therefore, to make sure that my position had no effect, various strategies were followed in the interviews. First, the participants were given a summary of the study and how their participation could enrich it and describing my role as a researcher. Second, the researcher followed the same questions, with their sub-questions, for all participants to avoid the assumption of shared knowledge between researcher and participants. Third, to overcome such assumptions, I based the survey and interview questions on literature, which was evaluated by a panel of experts, as examined in the pilot study. Fourth, the participants were not asked to provide their names, which encouraged them to express their views freely. Fifth, I clarified the procedure for all participants by giving them the information sheet at the beginning of the interview, which explained in detail (as in **section 4.8.2**) that our relationship was a research relationship rather than one based on my position in the governorate. The purpose of that explanation was to establish an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

4.8 Implementation

In this stage, the fieldwork takes place. The next two sections give a detailed description of all steps followed in this stage.

4.8.1 Implementation of the survey: sending the invitations by emails

The first stage in the field work is sending invitations to targeted participants. In this stage, the researcher prepared a non-response strategy. Callegaro *et al.* (2015) believe that the researcher should invite more participants to cover non-response, setting an appropriate time for sending invitations as well as clearing the format of invitations. In addition, the email invitations should use the participants' organisational email addresses to protect the invitations from being sent to spam. Invitations should be checked for spelling mistakes or incorrect URL links which could affect continuity in completing the survey. Of equal importance is constructing the first page which should include information about the study and motivate

recipients to participate in it. The researcher has to make sure that the URL link for the web survey is valid on all browsers (Chrome, Explorer and Firefox); otherwise all participants should be asked to confirm that their internet browser is compatible with the web survey (Couper, 2008).

In light of these remarks on adopting web survey, I set up a protocol to follow in the field work. The first step was sending invitations to the study sample according to the workplace, by emails through training centres in the governorates. Three thousand invitations were sent to the sample of the study to cover for non-response . A reminder was sent after a week. Unfortunately, the response rate was low: only 5% of the study sample. Therefore, another reminder was sent to the sample of the study, the response increased by ten percent, when the third reminder was sent, the responses of the study increased to more than 14.6% (438) which was more than the target of the study (367).

My reflection of the success of web-survey in Omani culture can be summarised into the main points. The invitations were sent during working hours and by the work emails, which I believe was important for raising responses to the web survey. Moreover, providing technical support for participants after sending the invitations plays a crucial role in raising the number of responses in my study. In the third reminder, the responses increased highly and to my surprise, many participants thanked me by sending emails for giving them the chance to participate in the study; more than that, some of them offered help with my research. These responses were from participants not from my directorate and they had no access to my identity. Bispo (2015) asserts that, in organisation research, all reflections could contain a message. I had two indications of these gestures of thanks. The first indication is that, in Omani culture, a person approaching you could have two meanings: one, that you are a valued and important person; and two, that he is approaching you because he is looking for help. Similarly, Al Wahshi (2015) had the same experience when the participants thanked him for selecting them

for the sample of his study. The second indication is that employees are eager to express their views about the practices in the MOE and are looking for any chance to do so; participation in the study could satisfy their eagerness. Using web survey in this study allows employees to express their views freely; moreover, using emails circumvents any bureaucratic barriers that might block the survey from reaching the study sample. Finally, I would say that using web survey is time-consuming, and the researcher should be aware of all challenges, especially the response rate, which could be higher in organisations where a list of the sample is available to researchers.

4.8.2 Implementation of the interview

Conducting an interview is a complex undertaking requiring the researcher to be aware of the context where the study takes place. The researcher sent the invitation to the sample of the study and arranged appointments after getting their approval. Most of the interviews, by the participants' choice, took place in their offices where they felt more comfortable about engaging in the interview. For participants whose offices were shared, another office was selected to help them feel more relaxed when expressing their views of selection practices in the MOE.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study and the length of the interview and handed them the consent form, information sheet and interview questions. Moreover, I tried to establish an atmosphere of trust, respect and confidence by assuring them of the confidentiality of the data and making clear that any participant could stop at any stage of the interview. Each participant took five minutes to read the forms and the questions; then the researcher asked their permission to record the interview. Some interviewees refused to have the interview recorded, so in these cases the researcher took notes during the interview. I noticed that in some instances, after I stopped recording, the participants started to give more examples and more explicit details of the

selection practices in the MOE, and in these circumstances, again, I took notes. At the end of each interview, I thanked the participants for their valuable time and their answers in the interview.

Harvey (2011) insisted that to be successful in interviewing senior management, a researcher should know their characteristics and the context. I agree that understanding the culture and the characteristics of senior management would help a researcher in such a study. The words “senior management” refer to those who hold high positions in the MOE and have the power to make decisions in the organisation. Having said that, Smith (2006) argues that titles of positions do not express the power which is exercised in the organisations. In other words, those who are categorised as senior by title could have less power than others who possess the actual power in the organisation. In this study, the term “senior management” refers to the procedures used to interview these groups: The Minister, Undersecretary, General Directors, and Advisors. Al Wahshi (2015) proposes that face-to-face interviews are preferable in interviewing the senior management in the MOE. In this study, all interviews either for elites or other officers were face-to-face, except for one interview which was with a female participant and accordingly was conducted by phone. Interviewing senior managers is challenging when they are busy, and this was especially true at the time of the study, January 2018, when final exams for the first semester took place. Thus, I rescheduled some interviews, which took longer than expected, especially in the case of General Directors whom I replaced with Assistant General Directors in some governorates.

4.9 Analysis of the data

This study includes quantitative and qualitative data. Cohen *et al.* (2013) believe that SPSS and NVivo are well established software packages for data analysis in research. Hence, for the quantitative data, SPSS will be used to analyse the data, while NVivo will be used to

analyse qualitative data. Having said that, data processing should be edited and coded before the stage of analysis. In editing, the researcher makes sure that data are complete, accurate and uninformed (Cohen *et al.*, 2013). The researcher also ensures that all the answers are provided and that the input of the answers is accurate. Also, as ambiguous instructions could provide different answers, the researcher is obliged to make sure that all answers are the same. Callegaro *et al.* (2015) argue that these errors in web survey could be avoided with good construction. After that, the researcher assigns a code for nominal data such as gender male “1” and female “2”. Also, the Likert scale was coded with “5” for strongly agree, “4” for agree, “3” for neutral, “2” for disagree and “1” for strongly disagree. Moreover, all demographic information was coded; for example, academic qualifications were coded with “4” for PhD, “3” for master’s, “2” for bachelor’s, and “1” for the diploma.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter presents the methodological approach that was followed to gather the data of this study. The chapter starts by describing the philosophical assumptions of the research, the research strategy and research design. It also includes the rationale for using a mixed methods quantitative and qualitative approach. This was followed by an explanation of each tool: designing, piloting and implementation. Equally important, this study includes the ethical considerations which were followed in conducting the study. The next chapter will focus on the findings of the study, chapter five will present the findings of the survey, and chapter six the findings of the interviews.

Chapter Five Quantitative Data findings

5.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to present the analysis of the quantitative data of the study. The quantitative data are constructed from the web survey. The web survey findings help to explore the views of participants on the current procedures of selection processes at the MOE. Moreover, the web survey findings help to draw a baseline of the participants' views on these processes. The quantitative data also help to explore the difference between the groups of participants according to the demographic variables. This chapter will state the quantitative findings and the analysis will be deepened in chapters seven and eight.

The first section is about the demographic variables which are analysed by frequencies and percentages for each group. The findings are presented in tables and figures to give a clearer picture of each variable. The second section contains 37 items grouped into four main variables:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1- Selection and Ministry culture | (12 statements) |
| 2- Employees | (9 items) |
| 3- Top officers | (7 statements) |
| 4- External factors | (8 items) |

These four variables are linked with the main themes which are discussed in the literature review (Culture – Self Categorisation – Group Membership – Power Relationships). The five-point Likert scale (strongly agree-agree-neutral-disagree-strongly disagree) was used and these items are analysed by percentage as well as by mean and standard deviation, and the statements are ranked in descending order according to the mean value of each one. The criteria measurement for the mean score was ≤ 3.8 (high), 3.7 to 2.4 (moderate) and 2.3 to 1 (low). The third section is about ranking the parties who are responsible for employees' perceptions of

justice in the MOE. The fourth section is about organisational justice, and the 29 statements are divided into sub-variables:

- 1- Distributive justice (8 statements)
- 2- Procedural justice (11 statements)
- 3- Interactional justice (7 statements)

These themes are derived from the literature review which was presented in detail in chapter three. The five-point Likert scale (strongly agree-agree-neutral-disagree-strongly disagree) was used for all items in the survey.

The fifth section is about comparing the means of different groups according to the demographic variables of this study. The assumptions of the quality of variance and normality were checked to determine the appropriate test for identifying significant differences between the means of the groups. Therefore, T-test and Anova were used to determine significant differences between these means and the probability level of 0.05 was considered to calculate the significant difference between the means of different groups. **Table 5.1** shows the approaches used for each section of the analysis.

Table 5.1 The Statistical approaches of the analysis

Type of Analysis	Statistical Approach used
Demographic information	Frequency and Percentage
Participants' perceptions of selection processes	Percentage and standard deviation
Ranking who is responsible for employees' perceptions of justice in the Ministry	Frequency and Percentage
Participants' perceptions of organisational justice	Percentage and standard deviation
Significant difference between groups according to the demographic information	T-test, One-Way ANOVA

5.2 Participants' Demographic features

This section includes a descriptive analysis of the demographics of the participants in the study. The data in this section are presented by frequencies and percentage.

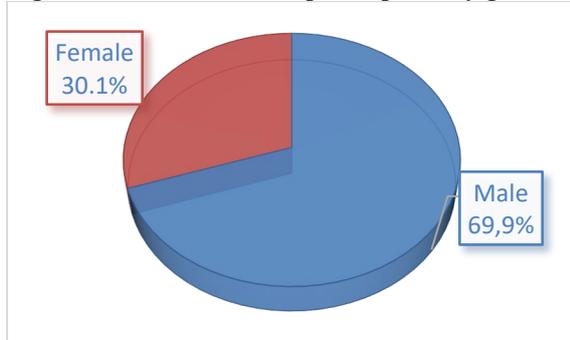
5.2.1 Gender

This section considers the male and female participants in the study. **Table 5.2** below shows the distribution of participants by gender.

Table 5.2 Distribution of participants by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	306	69.9%
Female	132	30.1%
Total	438	100%

Figure 5.1 Distribution of participants by gender



The sample included 306 males (69.9%) and 132 females (30.1%). The uneven participation between male and female refers to the grand total of the number of employees in the MOE, where males represent 70% and females 30% of workers in the MOE and governorates. This contrasts with the grand total in schools, where there is a higher percentage of females than of males.

5.2.2 Work Experience

This section displays participants' characteristics in relationship to their work experience. They were divided into four groups: (0-4), (5-14), (15-20) and (21 and more). **Table 5.3** and **Figure 5.** display the results for the distribution of respondents according to their work experience.

Table 5.3 Distribution of participants by work experience

Years	Frequency	Percent
0-4	20	4.6%
5-14	97	22.2%
15-20	160	36.6%
21 and more	160	36.6%
Total	438	100%

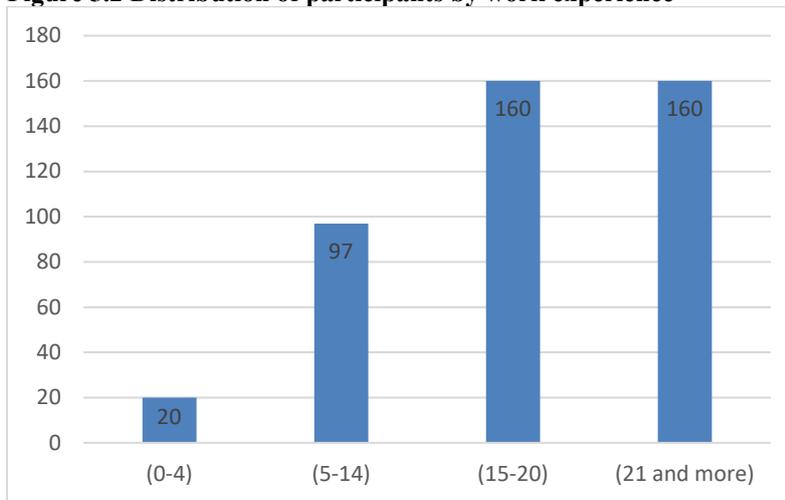
Figure 5.2 Distribution of participants by work experience

Table 5.3 and **Figure 5.2** display the duration of work experience of the participants. The participants (N=438) were categorised into four groups. The lowest percentage (4.6%) is that of the group with the lowest work experience. This can be explained by the fact that this group represents 1.7 % of the total number of employees in the MOE. The highest groups among the participants have (15-20) and (21 and more) years of experience, which is normal compared with the total number of employees in the MOE, where most staff fall into these groups.

5.2.3 Academic qualifications

This section shows the academic qualifications of the participants of the study. **Table 5.4** below shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents in terms of academic qualifications.

Table 5.4 Distribution of the participants by academic qualifications

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
PhD	15	3.4
Master's Degree	159	36.3
Bachelor's Degree	222	50.7
Diploma	42	9.6
Total	438	100%

Figure 5.3 The participants by academic qualifications

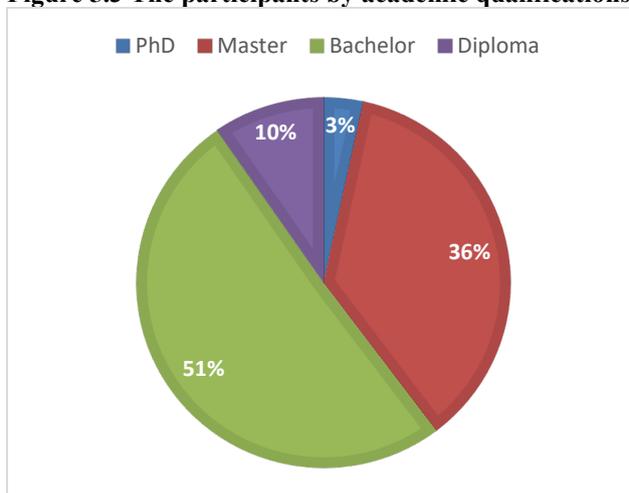


Table 5.4 and **Figure 5.3** give an overall picture of the distribution, by academic qualifications, of the 438 participants in the sample. The figures for participants' academic qualifications in this study resemble the distribution of academic qualifications in the MOE, where the highest group consists of bachelor's degree holders, and PhD holders are the lowest group.

5.2.4 Title of positions

This section displays information about the participants in the study according to the title of their position. **Table 5.5** and **Figure 5.4** below show the results for distribution of participants in terms of position title.

Table 5.5 Percentage distribution of the participants by title of position

Position	Frequency	Percent
Advisor	4	0.9%
General Director	4	0.9%
Assistant Director General	4	0.9%
Expert	12	2.7%
Department director	16	3.7%
Assistant director	18	4.1%
Head of Section	74	16.9%
Specialist	36	8.2%
Researcher	21	4.8%
Member	68	15.5%
Technician	27	6.2%
Trainer	7	1.6%
Supervisor	122	27.9%
Engineer	5	1.1%
Staff	20	4.6%
Total	438	100

Figure 5.4 The titles of positions of the participants

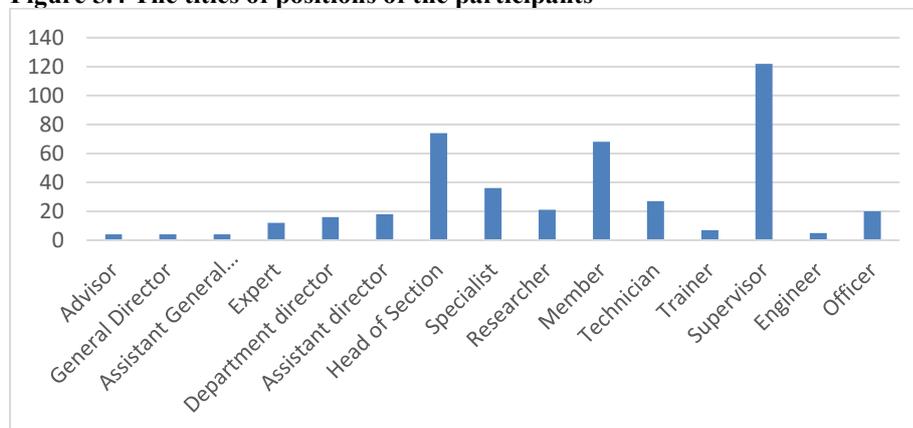


Table 5.5 and **Figure 5.4** show the distribution of the titles of participants' positions. Based on these titles, the participants were divided into 15 groups. The table indicates that the highest group consisted of supervisors and the lowest consisted of advisors, general directors and assistant general directors, which is normal, because these groups contain the lowest numbers compared to the grand total of employees in the MOE.

5.2.5 Place of work

This section shows the workplaces of the participants in the study. **Table 5.6** and **Figure 5.5** display the results for the distribution of respondents according to place of work.

Table 5.6 Distribution of the participants by place of work

Type of School	Frequency	Percent
The central office	83	18.9%
Muscat	60	13.7%
Batinah South	43	9.8%
Batinah North	26	5.9%
Sharqiyah South	29	6.6%
Sharqiyah North	21	4.8%
Dakhiliyah	42	9.6%
Dhahirah	57	13%
Buraimi	10	2.3%
Wusta	18	4.1%
Musandam	17	3.9%
Dhofar	32	7.3%
Total	438	100%

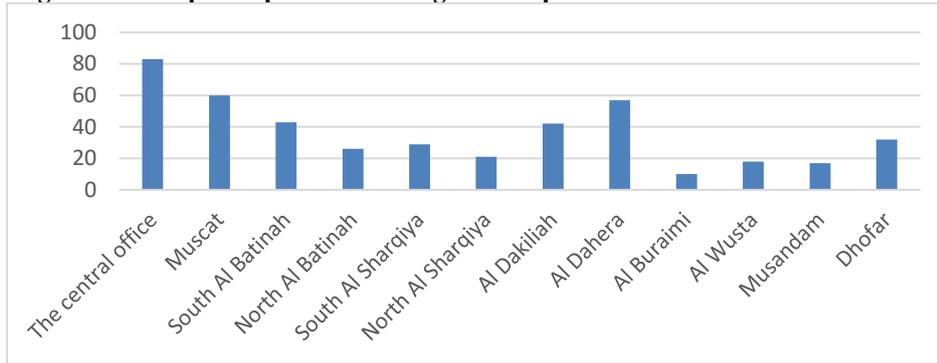
Figure 5.5 The participants according to workplace

Table 5.6 and **Figure 5.5** show the distribution of the participants according to place of work. Within the grand total of employees in the MOE, all percentages of participation are based on the number of employees in each governorate. The highest rate of participation was from participants working in the central office, and the lowest was from those working in Al Buraimi Governorate, with 10 participants (2.3%).

5.2.6 Applying for supervisory positions

The final section displays the results for the percentage of participants who applied for supervisory positions and those who did not apply. **Table 5.7** and **Figure 5.6** below show the results for distribution of participants in terms of applying or not applying for supervisory positions.

Table 5.7 Distribution of participants by applying or not applying for supervisory positions

Applying	Frequency	Percent
Yes	245	55.9%
No	193	44.1%
Total	438	100%

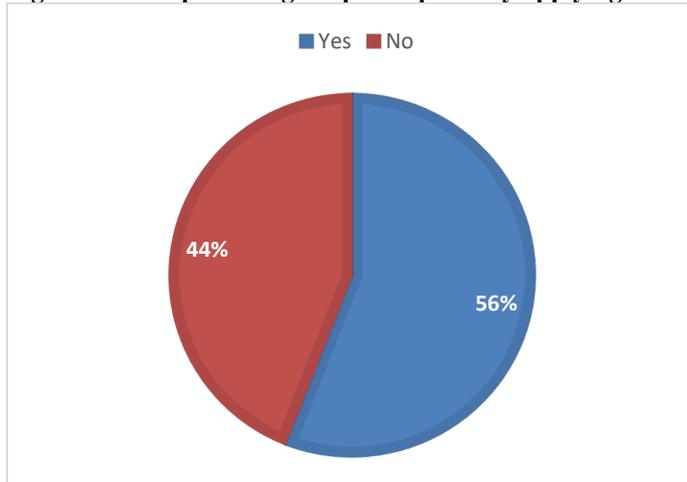
Figure 5.6 The percentage of participants by applying or not applying for supervisory positions

Table 5.7 and **Figure 5.6** give a picture of the distribution of participants according to whether or not they apply. Of the 438 participants in the study, 55.9% (245) have applied for supervisory positions in the MOE, while 44.1% (193) have not done so.

5.3 Descriptive analysis

The structure of the web survey is based on the literature review; therefore, to perform the comprehensive analysis the web survey is divided into two main variables. The first is selection processes, which is divided into sub-variables: selection processes and Ministry culture, employees, top officers, and external forces. Each variable contains a different number of items. The second main variable is the procedures of the selection processes, and it is divided into sub-variables: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. The five-point Likert scale (strongly agree-agree-neutral-disagree-strongly disagree) was used and the criteria measurement for the mean score was ≤ 3.8 (high), 3.7 to 2.4 (moderate) and 2.3 to 1 (low).

5.3.1 Selection processes

This section explores the findings of the first section of the web survey. The section is divided into four variables based on the literature review of this study. The items are ranked in descending order according to the highest average score of the mean. Each section will start by

discussing the general findings of each item, followed by comparison of the findings between the three administrative levels: senior staff, middle management, and junior staff. This comparison will highlight the similarities and differences between the three groups, to give more insight into selection processes in the MOE.

5.3.1.1 Selection processes and Ministry culture

Table 5.8 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding selection processes and Ministry culture

N	Items	Percent					Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	Rumours of injustice in selection influence employees' evaluation of justice in these processes.	28.1	53.2	14.2	4.3	0.2	4.05	.785
2	The culture has a role of spreading stories of favouritism whether it is true or not.	26.5	52.5	12.3	7.3	1.4	3.95	.896
3	The current process of selection is better than the old one which was mainly dependent on nominations from general directors.	33.8	35.8	21.7	6.6	2.1	3.93	1.001
4	The current procedures of selection are used as a legal cover to select recommended employees by officers.	24.9	37.4	25.1	11.9	0.7	3.74	.985
5	The organisational culture has an influence on determining justice in selection processes in these organisations.	18.5	40.2	25.3	11.6	4.3	3.57	1.054
6	The panels in the directorates or the central office have great influence on how employees perceive selection processes.	13	48.6	23.5	12.3	2.5	3.57	.951

7	Selecting the best and most efficient employees for supervisory positions is the main goal of selection panels either in the directorate or the central office	12.6	42.5	23.1	15.5	6.8	3.39	1.089
8	The existence of selection processes develops a sense of justice among employees.	11.4	42	21.2	19.4	5.9	3.34	1.095
9	The selection processes are based on fairness and standard criteria.	6.8	44.5	24	20.1	4.6	3.29	1.010
10	The MOE works hard to create fair opportunities for all employees.	6.8	41.3	26.5	20.8	4.6	3.25	1.008
11	The priority for selection in supervisory positions is given to employees who are from the same section-department regardless of the competency of employees from other departments.	15.1	28.1	19.9	29.9	7.1	3.14	1.204
12	The panels prefer employees of long experience to fill supervisory positions regardless of their competency, as a reward for their long service in the MOE.	6.6	24	24.9	34.5	10	2.83	1.106

The general findings show that three items have a high score: rumours of injustice in selection processes, the culture has a role of spreading stories of favouritism, and the current process is better than the old one. The scores of the remaining items are moderate, ranking from the lowest (item 12, $M=2.83$), the panels prefer employees with long experience, to the highest (item 4, $M=3.74$), the current procedures are used as a legal cover to select recommended employees. Even though items seven to ten – focusing on efficiency of selecting best candidates ($M=3.39$), selection processes create sense of justice ($M=3.34$), fairness and standardised criteria

of selection ($M=3.29$), and the MOE works hard to create fair opportunities for all employees ($M=3.25$) – have moderate scores of means, these items show some disagreement, ranking from 22.3% in item seven to 25.4% in item ten, which indicates that more than 20% of the participants are still dissatisfied with selection processes in the MOE.

As indicated by the general results, participants believe that the culture has a high influence through spreading rumours about selection processes which affect participants negatively. Moreover, participants prefer the current practices of selection which depend on competition, compared to the old practices which relied on nominations from General Directors. Having said that, participants evaluate these practices as a legal cover for selecting recommended employees, which reflects their uncertainty about the fairness of these selection processes. These results are supported by the lowest mean in items one and two within the moderate items: the MOE works hard to create fair opportunities, and selection processes are based on fairness and standard criteria. In addition, the findings propose that more than 20% of the participants are uncertain about the following items: these efforts by the MOE are based on fairness criteria, the current practices develop a sense of justice, and panels select the best candidates either in the central office or the governorates.

Table 5.9 Differences between the three administrative levels regarding selection procedures

N	Items	Senior Staff	Middle Management	Junior Staff
1	Rumours of injustice in selection influence employees' evaluation of justice in these processes.	4.0	3.95	4.08
2	The culture has a role of spreading stories of favouritism whether it is true or not.	4.0	3.95	3.95
3	The current process of selection is better than the old one which was mainly dependent on nominations from general directors.	4.0	3.99	3.90
4	The current procedures of selection are used as a legal cover to select recommended employees by officers.	3.17	3.62	3.83
5	The organisational culture has an influence on determining justice in selection processes in these organisations.	3.83	3.58	3.54
6	The panels in the directorates or the central office have great influence on how employees perceive selection processes.	3.54	3.56	3.58

7	Selecting the best and efficient employees for supervisory positions is the main goal of selection panels either in the directorate or the central office.	3.92	3.64	3.26
8	The existence of selection processes develops a sense of justice among employees.	3.58	3.55	3.24
9	The selection processes are based on fairness and standard criteria.	3.42	3.38	3.25
10	The MOE works hard to create fair opportunities for all employees.	3.46	3.40	3.18
11	The priority for selection in supervisory positions is given to employees who are from same section-department regardless of the competency of employees from other departments.	2.54	3.16	3.18
12	The panels prefer employees of long experience to fill supervisory positions regardless of their competency, as a reward for their long service in the MOE.	2.50	2.81	2.86

The findings in **Table 5.9** show some convergent ratios between the three administrative levels in the first, second, third and sixth items. These items are about spreading rumours, the influence of culture in spreading rumours, preference for current procedures of selection, and influence of interview panels on candidates. In contrast, there are differences, especially between senior staff and junior staff. The notable differences are in items four, seven and eleven: about using the processes as a legal cover, selection of best candidates as the main goal of the panels, and the priority in selection for vacancies given to employees from the same departments. The differences show that senior staff have more positive views of the selection processes than the middle management, followed by the junior staff.

Compared with the general findings, middle management and junior staff had a stronger belief than senior staff in the selection processes as a legal cover. Moreover, for the items regarding fairness and providing fair opportunities, senior staff have a higher average score of mean, which indicates that they are more satisfied with these processes. Another key fact to note is that middle management has higher scores of means than junior staff on fairness and creating opportunities, which shows that junior staff are the group least satisfied in relation to these items.

In this table, there is an agreement between the three administrative levels of the highest and lowest scores of means. The highest items indicate that the three groups agreed about

spreading of rumours, the influence of the culture, and preference for current practices. Even though the three groups agreed on the items with the lowest scores of means, middle and junior staff produced higher scores of means than senior staff on the following items: priority for candidates from the same department regardless of competence, and preference for long-experienced candidates to fill vacancies. This indicates that senior staff agreed less than middle management and junior staff that experienced candidates and candidates from the same departments are given priority in filling vacancies.

5.3.1.2 Employees

Table 5.10 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding employees

N	Items	Percent					Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	The employee's connections have a relationship to his/her success in selection processes.	34.9	41.3	14.4	8.7	0.7	4.01	.951
2	The employees prefer to fill the vacancies with employees from same section, department or directorate.	26.9	53.7	10.3	8.7	0.5	3.98	.873
3	Some employees tend to justify their lack of success by claiming favouritism in these processes.	21.9	52.5	16.9	7.5	1.1	3.87	.881
4	Employees' inflated view of their own potential could affect their judgement of the fairness of selection.	17.6	58	17.6	6.6	0.2	3.86	.787
5	Some employees do not apply for positions because they perceive processes as unfair.	26.3	42.7	20.5	9.6	0.9	3.84	.954
6	Negative feelings from previous experiences of failure in selection could affect employees' judgement of selection processes.	17.1	58	16.4	7.1	1.4	3.82	.844
7	The existence of many employees is a challenge for panels in the directorate.	20.1	47.9	12.8	17.1	2.1	3.67	1.045

8	The sons and siblings of known families have more chances of success in the selection processes.	27.6	31.5	23.1	15.3	2.5	3.66	1.111
9	The high demand from many participants could create a feeling of unfairness.	10	53.9	20.8	14.9	1.4	3.57	.899
10	Both male and female applicants have the same opportunities in the selection process.	15.8	43.2	19.4	18.7	3	3.50	1.058
11	All employees are aware of their rights in all general issues and particularly in selection processes.	5.5	40.9	23.7	25.8	4.1	3.18	1.010

The general results show that five items have high means and other items have moderate ones. The highest scores of means are: item one ($M=4.01$), the employee's connections influence success in the selection; item two (3.98), filling vacancies with candidates from same departments; item three ($M=3.87$), past experiences influence employees' perceptions; item four ($M=3.86$), inflated view of own potential influences evaluation of selection processes; and item five ($M=3.84$), employees' perceptions of unfairness hinders them from competing in these processes.

According to the general findings, the highest mean reflects a belief by participants that connections have a role in success in the selection, while the lowest mean reveals uncertainty among participants about awareness of their rights. However, the SD of the lowest mean is ($SD=1.010$) compared to the overall SD of these items ($SD=.946$), which indicates that participants have different views as regards knowing their rights in the MOE. The second highest mean ($M=3.98$) is of the item: participants prefer to fill the vacancy from the same department, indicating a preference for in-group members for these positions. The third and fourth highest values of the mean might suggest that participants' past experiences of lack of success in selection processes could influence their judgements about the processes.

Table 5.11 Differences between the three administrative levels regarding employees

N	Items	Senior Staff	Middle Management	Junior Staff
1	The employee's connections have a relationship to his/her success in selection processes.	3.54	3.94	4.08
2	The employees prefer to fill the vacancies by employees from same section, department or directorate.	3.71	4.04	3.98
3	Some employees tend to justify their lack of success by claiming favouritism in these processes.	4.25	3.84	3.84
4	Employees' inflated view of their own potential could affect their judgement of the fairness of selection.	4	3.75	3.89
5	Some employees do not apply for positions because they perceive processes as unfair.	3.71	3.84	3.85
6	Negative feelings from previous experiences of failure in selection could affect employees' judgement of selection processes.	3.96	3.76	3.84
7	The existence of many employees is a challenge for panels in the directorate.	3.79	3.50	3.72
8	The sons and siblings of known families have more chances of success in the selection processes.	2.96	3.50	3.78
9	The high demand from many participants could create a feeling of unfairness.	3.92	3.56	3.55
10	Both male and female applicants have the same opportunities in the selection process.	3.71	3.81	3.37
11	All employees are aware of their rights in all general issues and particularly in selection processes.	3.42	3.25	3.13

The general overview of the comparison between the three administrative levels shows that middle management and junior staff are closer to each other in their views than to senior staff. The similarities between the three levels are in items two, four and seven: the preference for filling these positions from the same department, employees' inflated view of their potential could affect their judgements of selection, and a huge number of candidates could be a challenge. On the other hand, there are differences regarding the influence of employees' connections on success in the selection, justification of lack of success by claiming favouritism, sons and siblings of elite families having more chances, and high demand for these positions potentially creating a feeling of unfairness between candidates.

Compared with the general findings, senior staff have less belief than middle management and junior staff that employees' connections have a significant influence on the success of the candidates. In the same vein, senior staff have a more positive score of mean

than the other two groups regarding knowledge of legal rights among employees. This indicates a gap between the senior group and the other two groups in the belief in employees' required legal knowledge.

Contrary to the findings in **Table 5.9**, showing agreement between the three different administrative levels in the highest scores of means, **Table 5.11** shows a clear difference especially between senior staff and other two groups. The middle management and junior staff were more in agreement on the relationship of connections and success in the selection, and preference for candidates from the same departments. On the other hand, senior staff ranked candidates' connections as the second lowest score of mean. This indicates that senior staff disagreed with middle management and junior staff that connections influence the selection processes in the MOE. Furthermore, middle management and junior staff have agreed on the lowest score of mean, regarding awareness of employees' rights in the MOE. This recommends that awareness of their rights among employees is low, which creates a challenge for the MOE to raise legal awareness among employees.

5.3.1.3 The Senior Staff

Table 5.12 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding senior staff

N	Items	Percent					Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	Employees' good relationships with General Directors could be an advantage, helping them to succeed in selection processes.	28.1	47.9	14.6	8	1.4	3.93	.931
2	General directors have direct influence of how employees perceive selection processes.	21	45.4	24.2	7.5	1.8	3.76	.929
3	Department directors influence chances of success in selection processes.	20.1	47.5	20.3	11	1.1	3.74	.939

4	Any recommendation for any employee during the selection processes is unfair.	32	28.1	21.9	16.4	1.6	3.72	1.126
5	General directors face huge pressures from elite families and top officials to select some employees.	24.2	34.5	29.9	9.8	1.6	3.70	.995
6	The top officials' recommendations for some staff are necessary to achieve balance between the legal requirements and selection of best candidates for these positions.	18	44.1	20.8	13.9	3.2	3.60	1.036
7	Department directors have direct influence on how employees perceive selection processes.	13.2	46.8	26.5	11.6	1.8	3.58	.924
8	The panels are always looking for best participants regardless of their families or connections with top officials.	4.6	33.1	35.8	16.9	9.6	3.06	1.032

The general findings show that only one item has a high mean ($M=3.93$), with other items' means being moderate. The highest value means ($M=3.93$) could propose that good relationships with General Directors have an impact on selection processes, which reflects power relationships in the organisations. On the other hand, the lowest mean ($M=3.06$) intersperses that the panels are looking for the best employees regardless of their connections or families, and further, that participants believe that power relationships have a high impact on selection processes. This agrees with the highest mean for the influence of relationships in selection processes.

Having said that, the SD of the lowest value of the mean is ($SD=1.032$), which reflects a spread of views regarding power relationships. Comparing the respective influences of General Directors and Department Directors in items two and three, it appears that participants

believe that General Directors have slightly higher influence and less SD than department directors, even though General Directors have no daily interactions with employees and no impact on employees' assessment. What it does indicate is the greater impact on employees of the General Director's position.

One of the interesting findings is the contradiction in views between item four (M=3.72) and item six (M=3.60). In item four, 60.1% of the participants express their dissatisfaction with any recommendations from the senior officers for any candidates; however, in item six, 62.1% agreed that it is necessary for senior officers to recommend some candidates for these positions.

These findings indicate that, even though participants believe that recommendations in selection processes are unfair, when such a recommendation is in their favour it would be acceptable. Another interpretation of these findings could be that participants, despite believing that recommendations are unfair, still think that senior officers' interference is required to achieve balance between applying the law and selecting the best candidates for these positions.

Table 5.13 Differences between the three administrative levels regarding senior staff

N	Items	Senior Staff	Middle Management	Junior Staff
1	Employees' good relationships with General Directors could be an advantage, helping them to succeed in selection processes.	3.42	3.84	4.01
2	General directors have direct influence on how employees perceive selection processes.	3.25	3.70	3.82
3	Department directors influence employees' chances of success in selection processes.	3.08	3.55	3.87
4	Any recommendation for any employee during the selection processes is unfair.	4.08	3.69	3.71
5	General directors face huge pressures from elite families and top officials to select some employees.	3.08	3.65	3.76
6	The top officials' recommendations for some staff are necessary to achieve balance between the legal requirements and selection of best candidates for these positions.	3.04	3.55	3.66
7	Department directors have direct influence on how employees perceive selection processes.	3.17	3.30	3.71
8	The panels are always looking for best candidates regardless of their families or connections with top officials.	3.38	3.26	2.97

The general picture as shown by the table is that middle management and junior staff have similar views to each other but differ from senior staff, with huge differences in all items except items four and eight. These two items are about the influence of recommendations, and panels looking for candidates regardless of their connections. The differences between senior management on one side and the other two groups on the other side show that senior staff have views far removed from those of the other two groups. Senior staff believed that relationships with the General Director, direct influence of General Directors on employees regarding selection processes, the influence of department directors on employees, and pressures from elite families, have less influence on selection processes than is believed to be the case by the other two groups.

Compared with the general findings, the senior staff believe that power relationships have less influence on selection processes; however, middle management and junior staff believe that these power relationships, especially involving the General Directors, have an influence on these processes. The three groups at different levels agreed that General Directors have more influence than directors of departments on how employees perceived selection processes.

Similar to the findings displayed in **Table 5.11**, the comparison between the highest scores of means shows that middle management and junior staff are more in agreement with each other than with senior staff. Employees' relationships with the Director General and the connection of this factor with success was the highest mean at the middle and junior levels, whereas the unfairness of recommendation during the selection processes ranked highest with senior staff. The second highest mean for the senior staff was the lowest mean for middle management and junior staff, concerning the fairness of selection panels regardless of relationships with elite families and senior officers inside and outside the MOE. This

comparison shows that senior staff believed in the work of selection panels, while middle management and junior staff have different views on these panels.

5.3.1.4 The External Forces

Table 5.14 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding external forces

N	Items	Percent					Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	Interference from elite families and top officials influences the credibility of selection in the MOE.	37.4	46.3	11.4	4.6	0.2	4.16	.817
2	The successful cases against the MOE are evidence of the guarantee of employees' rights in public organisations.	36.3	47	11.9	4.1	0.7	4.14	.830
3	The multi systems and laws between different governmental bodies are unfair.	30.8	38.4	22.6	6.8	1.4	3.90	.961
4	The Civil Service law creates a lot of challenges for the MOE in selecting best employees for supervisory positions.	29.9	41.6	14.8	10.7	3	3.85	1.060
5	The existence of governmental bodies which have independent policies of selection could influence Civil Service employees' evaluation of justice.	20.5	41.6	27.6	8.7	1.6	3.71	.943
6	The protest events in 2011 influence employees' perception of justice in the MOE.	19.2	37.4	29.7	11.4	2.3	3.60	.996

The general findings show that four items have a high score of mean and two have moderate scores of means. The highest-scored items are: interference from elite and top officials influence the credibility of the selection (M=4.16, SD=.817); successful cases against the MOE are evidence of participants' guaranteed rights (M= 4.14, SD=.830); the multi systems and laws between different governmental bodies are unfair (M=3.90, SD= .961); and the Civil Service law creates a lot of challenges for the MOE in selecting the best employees for supervisory positions (M=3.85, SD=1.060).

Scores on these items could indicate that participants do not agree with any interference in selection processes, that the existence of the Administrative Court represents protection of their rights, and that the existence of different bodies influences their judgements of the selection processes. The moderate scores of means are found for the following items: the existence of different governmental bodies could influence employees' perceptions of justice in these processes ($M=3.71$), and the protest in 2011 has a moderate influence on their perceptions of fairness in selection for these positions.

Table 5.15 Differences between the three administrative levels regarding external factors

N	Items	Senior Staff	Middle Management	Junior Staff
1	Interference from elite families and top officials influence the credibility of selection in the MOE.	3.75	4.16	4.20
2	The successful cases against the MOE are evidence of the guarantee of employees' rights in public organisations.	3.71	4.19	4.16
3	The multi systems and laws between different governmental bodies are unfair.	4.13	3.86	3.90
4	The Civil Service law creates a lot of challenges for the MOE in selecting best employees for supervisory positions.	4.04	3.73	3.87
5	The existence of governmental bodies which have independent policies of selection could influence employees of Civil Service evaluation of justice.	3.79	3.71	3.70
6	The protest events in 2011 influence employees' perception of justice in the MOE.	3.58	3.49	3.64

In general, this table demonstrates that the three administrative levels have greater compatibility than was shown in the tables in the previous sections. A possible explanation for this agreement is that these items are focused more on external factors which could influence selection processes. The highly agreed element is item number five, which focuses on the influence of existing government bodies on employees' perception of justice in the MOE. On the other hand, there is a difference in views regarding the representation of legal cases against the MOE. The middle and junior staff have the positive view that legal cases are evidence of employees' rights being guaranteed in public organisations.

Compared with the general findings, the senior staff's highest average score of the mean is for the statement that multi systems and laws between governmental bodies are not fair. In

contrast, middle management and junior staff's highest score of the mean is for the view that interference from elite families and senior officials influences the credibility of the selection processes.

Similarly, to the previous findings in this section, the comparison of highest and lowest scores of means between the three levels shows more agreement than that in other sections, except for the item concerning evidence of employees' guaranteed rights being provided by successful cases. This showed the second lowest mean with senior management; however, it had the first and second highest scores of the mean with middle management and junior staff respectively. This shows that success in these cases against the MOE regarding selection processes has a high value among middle management and junior staff. Having said that, the three levels agree on the lowest score of the mean, regarding the low influence of protest on candidates' evaluation of selection processes.

5.3.1.5 The main findings of section one

In this section we will explore in general the first ten highest scores of mean and the ten lowest scores of mean for the four variables discussed previously. **Table 5.16** shows the highest ten items in scores of the means.

Table 5.16 The highest means statements in general for selection processes

No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	Interference from elite families and top officials influences the credibility of selection in the MOE.	4.16	.817
2	The successful cases against the MOE are evidence of the guarantee of employees' rights in public organisations.	4.14	.830
3	Rumours of injustice in selection influence employees' evaluation of justice in these processes.	4.05	.785
4	The employee's connections have a relation to his/her success in selection processes.	4.01	.951
5	The employees prefer to fill vacancies by candidates from the same section, department or directorate.	3.98	.873
6	The culture has a role of spreading stories of favouritism whether it is true or not.	3.95	.896

7	Employees' good relationships with General Directors could be an advantage, helping them to succeed in selection processes.	3.93	.931
8	The current process of selection is better than the old one which was mainly dependent on nominations from general directors.	3.93	1.001
9	The multi systems and laws between different governmental bodies are unfair.	3.90	.961
10	Some candidates tend to justify their lack of success by claiming favouritism in these processes.	3.87	.881

Table 5.16 shows that the highest scores of means reveal the influence of power relationships either from outside the MOE (item one, M=4.16) (item 4, M=4.01) or inside the MOE (item 7, M=3.93). Moreover, the culture has also influenced how the employees perceive the selection processes (item 3, M= 4.05) (item 6, M=3.95). Self-identity and group membership also have high influence (item 5, Mean=3.98) and (item 10, Mean=3.87). Finally, the national and organisational structure and how the employees' rights are protected have an influence on employees (item 2, Mean=4.14), (item 8, Mean= 3.93) and (item 9, Mean=3.90). These findings will be discussed in detail in chapter six. The next table shows the items with the least scores of means.

Table 5.17 The lowest means statements in general in selection processes

No	Item	Mean	SD
1	The panels in the directorates or the MOE have great influence on how employees perceive selection processes.	3.57	.951
2	The high demand from many employees could create a feeling of unfairness.	3.57	.899
3	The organisational culture has an influence on determining justice in selection processes in these organisations.	3.57	1.054
4	Both male and female applicants have the same opportunities in the selection process.	3.50	1.058
5	Selecting the best and most efficient candidates for supervisory positions is the main goal of selection panels either in the directorate or the MOE.	3.39	1.089
6	The existence of selection processes develops a sense of justice among employees.	3.34	1.095
7	The selection processes are based on fairness and standard criteria.	3.29	1.010
8	The MOE works hard to create fair opportunities for all employees.	3.25	1.008
9	All employees are aware of their rights in all general issues and particularly in selection processes.	3.18	1.010

10	The priority for selection in supervisory positions is for the candidates who are from same section-department regardless of the competency of candidates from other departments.	3.14	1.204
11	The panels are always looking for best candidates regardless of their families or connections with top officials.	3.06	1.032
12	The panels prefer employees of long experience to fill supervisory position regardless of their competency, as a reward for their long service in the MOE.	2.83	1.106

A general view of the table indicates that the lowest-scored items are about the selection procedures, except item three, about organisation culture (M=3.57). Item five (M=3.39) and item 11 (M=3.06) reflect participants' uncertainty as to whether the selection panel are looking for the best candidates for supervisory positions. On a related note, items seven (M=3.29) and eight (3.25) reveal the same uncertainty about creating fairness, fair opportunities, and the standardisation of the selection processes. On the other hand, item 10 (M=3.14) and item 12 (M=2.83) reflect the participants' belief that the panel do not prefer employees with long experience and from same department in which vacancies exist over other competent candidates for these positions. Item four (M=3.50) focuses on fair opportunities between male and female. I compared the means between male and female and found out that the female score has a lower mean (M=3.27) than the male (M=3.60). Next, I compared the means of place of work to find out whether it is regular in the MOE, compared with the female mean. I found that two directorates have lower means: Batinah North (M=3.09) and Al Wusta (2.94). These findings intersperse that female participants in Batinah North and Wusta are more dissatisfied than those in other directorates as regards fair opportunities between male and female.

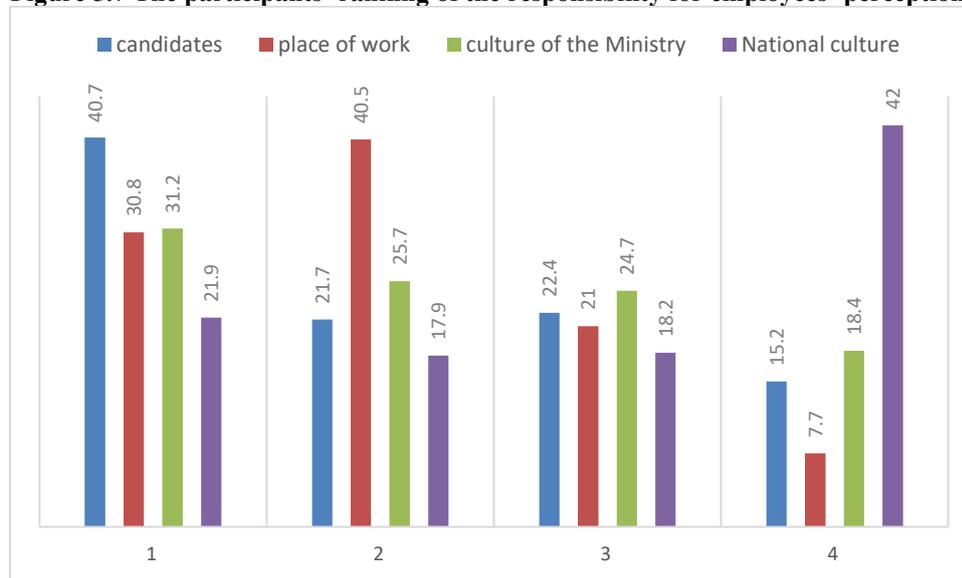
5.3.2 Ranking of the influence factors on employees' perceptions

In this section, the participants were asked to order four items (I, the place of work, the MOE, or the national culture) from most important (1) to least important (4), as to which, from their point of view, are responsible for employees' perceptions of selection processes.

Table 5.18 Percentages and order of the employees' perception

N	Items	Percent			
		1	2	3	4
1	The candidate himself-herself	40.7	21.7	22.4	15.2
2	The place of work (section-department)	30.8	40.5	21	7.7
3	The culture of the MOE	31.2	25.7	24.7	18.4
4	The national culture	21.9	17.9	18.2	42

Figure 5.7 The participants' ranking of the responsibility for employees' perceptions



The findings in the bar chart and the table propose that employees, at (40.7%), believed they are responsible for their perceptions, the place of the work ranked as the second factor influencing employees (40.5), the culture of the MOE ranked third (24.7), and the national

culture ranked fourth, as the lowest factor influencing employees' perceptions of the selection processes. These findings are interesting as they indicate that participants feel they are responsible for their perceptions, while the place of work also has a huge influence on their perceptions. These findings would agree with those in table (5.8) on items three and four, namely, participants' belief in their competence to make their own assessments, and how the high rating of self-esteem affects their assessment of justice in selection processes.

5.3.3 Organisational Justice

This section explores the findings for section three in the web survey regarding organisational justice in the selection processes in the MOE. This section is divided into three sub-sections based on the literature review of this study. The five-point Likert scale (strongly agree-agree-neutral-disagree-strongly disagree) was used and the criteria measurement for the mean score was ≤ 3.8 (high), 3.7 to 2.4 (moderate) and 2.3 to 1 (low). The items in each group are ranked in descending order according to the average score of the mean.

5.3.3.1 Distributive Justice

Table 5.19 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding distributive justice

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	Lack of knowledge of score of the performance appraisal which counted in the CV could lead to employee's feelings of injustice.	31.7	43.1	13.8	8.7	2.8	3.83	1.211
2	Employees' chances are affected by their relationships to superiors.	25.9	47.8	15.3	11.6	0	3.76	1.184
3	Candidates are appreciated and respected for their efforts in the MOE.	44	47.4	20.9	7.4	3.7	3.66	1.144
4	The vacancies in the directorates and the central office are advertised and all employees get access to it.	31.9	35.6	17.1	11.1	4.2	3.69	1.333
5	Transparency and clarity are the main core elements	20.8	32.9	20.8	17.1	8.3	3.24	1.461

	of selection processes in the Ministry.							
6	The higher management in the Ministry plan to select best employees for supervisory positions efficiently.	8.3	25.5	34.3	17.1	14.8	2.78	1.352
7	There is a system of information and history for all employees which helps the Ministry to select the best candidates.	2.3	22	28.5	31.8	15.4	2.32	1.323
8	Employees get fair training programmes which give them fair chances in the selection processes.	6	20.5	22.8	29.8	20.9	2.31	1.418

The high score means in this table (M=3.83) reflect employees' dissatisfaction with lack of knowledge of their annual performance score. The current practice of the Civil Service in all ministries in Oman enforces the confidentiality of annual employees' assessment, in which, of an average of the last two annual scores, 20% is calculated with other scores such as the CV and interview in the nomination form. However, lack of knowledge of the score of the performance appraisal could influence employees' perceptions of justice negatively in selection processes. The rest of the items have moderate scores, ranging from (M=3.76): participants' chances are affected by their relationships to superiors, to (M=2.31): participants get fair training programmes.

This highest score of mean recommends that participants lack knowledge of their appraisal grade which could strongly influence their perceptions of fairness in selection processes. The second highest mean refers to how power relationships could influence the selection processes and the lowest mean of this group refers to participants' dissatisfaction with and sense of unfairness of the training opportunities offered for all of them. The second lowest mean (2.32) proposes that participants feel that the MOE lacks a reliable system of information which helps the panels to select the best candidates for supervisory positions.

5.3.3.2 Procedural Justice

Table 5.20 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding procedural justice

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	Any delay in the processes of selection could lead employees to perceive unfairness.	18.5	55.6	19.9	4.6	1.4	3.81	.945
2	The norms (of academic qualification, work experience, positions, training courses, performance appraisal and interviews) give fair chances for all employees.	18.7	50.2	14.2	11.9	5	3.54	1.282
3	The interviews give the employees the space to show their knowledge of and competences for the position.	21.9	40.5	22.3	10.2	5.1	3.53	1.271
4	The marks (for academic qualification, work experience, positions, training courses, performance appraisal and interviews) give fair chances for all candidates.	16.1	48.6	17.9	11	6.4	3.46	1.274
5	The interviews focus on the technical side of the position rather than how to run and develop it.	11.6	35.8	32.6	18.1	1.9	3.19	1.263
6	There is a clear process for all candidates to appeal against selection decisions.	15.1	35.3	24.3	17	8.3	3.15	1.398
7	The interview panel in the directorates or the central office deals with all candidates with respect and dignity.	9.7	39.4	29.2	13.4	8.3	3.15	1.279
8	There is a clear timeline for the processes of selection.	19	35.2	16.2	21.8	7.9	3.14	1.512
9	In the selection for supervisory positions there is mutual trust between candidates and panels either in the directorates or the central office.	6.5	32.7	35	15.7	10.1	2.94	1.273
10	Candidates' complaints are handled objectively by a neutral committee in the MOE.	7.5	29	37.9	19.2	6.5	2.93	1.272
11	The interview panel in the directorate or the central office is fair for all candidates.	6.5	28.2	34.7	17.6	13	2.80	1.316

1 2	Candidates are evaluated against standard criteria without personal interference from superiors.	8.2	28.8	26.5	22.8	13.7	2.72	1.417
1 3	The MOE withdraws any selection decision if any candidate appeals against it before they go the court.	5.6	13	31.5	32.4	38	2.24	1.336

One item has a high score while the rest of the items have a moderate average mean, except for one that has a low average score. The highest average score means ($M=3.81$) is for the item that participants could perceive the unfairness of any delay in the processes of selection. The current practices of selection could take more than a year in some cases. Having said that, item no. (8), with average score mean of ($M=3.15$), indicates that more than 50% agree that there is a clear timeline for selection processes in the MOE; however, this item has the highest SD (1.512), which intersperses variation among participants on this point. In general, this could indicate participants' belief that the processes should be time-bound for all participants, with any undue delay affecting the credibility of the selection processes.

The lowest average score means ($M=2.24$) indicates participants' dissatisfaction with the current practices in handling appeals against selection processes, with only (18.6%) agreeing and (70.4%) disagreeing that the MOE would withdraw any decision. On the other hand, item (8) has an average score mean of ($M=2.92$) which proposes that participants believe there is a clear timeline for the processes in the MOE. That said, this item has the highest SD (1.512), which indicates a huge variance among participants regarding the existence of a timeline for these processes.

5.3.4 Interactional Justice

Table 5.21 The percentage, the mean and the standard deviation of the items regarding interactional justice

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	Any unintended mistake during the selection could influence employees' perception of justice.	15.7	59.7	19	4.6	0.9	3.80	.901
2	Any false information during the process could influence the candidates negatively.	11.2	57.7	23.7	6.5	0.9	3.65	.949
3	Superiors sympathise with candidates' rights of appeal against selection decisions.	0.9	16.7	55.8	19.5	7	2.66	1.073
4	Candidates' opinions about selection are considered by top management in the MOE.	4.6	23.1	36.1	25	11.1	2.60	1.308
5	All candidates get feedback on all their inquiries during selection processes.	1.4	28.5	25.7	29.9	14.5	2.43	1.340
6	Candidates are asked to give their feedback about the selection processes.	4.2	23.1	25	29.6	18.1	2.36	1.381
7	Candidates' suggestions are taken into consideration in developing selection processes in the MOE.	1.4	19.1	32.6	30.2	16.7	2.28	1.270
8	All candidates get feedback on the result of their application for a supervisory position.	3.3	18.7	24.8	27.6	25.7	2.19	1.340

On a general view, the table indicates that interactional justice is lower than procedural and distributive justice. This is illustrated by the average score mean of six items out of eight in this table which range from 2.66 to 2.19. The lowest mean in this table is the lowest among the tables, with only 22% of participants agreeing, against 53.3% who do not agree. The findings on items 4 to 8 suggest that candidates' opinions and suggestions are not considered, and that feedback either on the inquiries or on the results should be taken care of by the selection panels in the central office or the governorates. Equally important is the highest

average of the mean ($M=3.80$), which recommends that wrong information in any step of the processes could influence candidates' perceptions about selection processes.

5.3.4.1 The main findings of section two

In this section, I will explore in general the highest and lowest means of organisational justice. This exploration will help to give an overview of the highest and the lowest means of participants' views on organisational justice in the MOE.

Table 5.22 The highest score means in organisational justice

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Lack of knowledge of the score of the performance appraisal which counted in the CV could lead to an employee's feelings of injustice.	3.83	1.21
2	Any delay in the processes of selection could lead employees to perceive unfairness.	3.81	.945
3	Any unintended mistake during the selection could influence candidates' perception of justice.	3.80	.901
4	Candidates' chances are affected by their relationships to superiors.	3.76	1.18
5	The vacancies in the directorates and the central office are advertised and all employees get access to it.	3.69	1.33
6	Candidates are appreciated and respected for their efforts in the MOE.	3.66	1.14

The highest means in the organisational justice section intersperse that candidates' awareness of their score in the annual performance, the delay in the selection processes, and mistakes during the processes have a high negative influence on the candidates' perceptions of the selection processes. The power relationship also has a strong influence on candidates. The participants are seeking highly valued publicly advertised vacant posts for all employees in the MOE. Having said that, the SD of this statement has the highest score, which reflects higher distribution of the candidates' views than of the rest of the statements. Finally, the participants highly value the MOE's appreciation and respect for their efforts, which reflects the positive work environment in the MOE.

Table 5.23 The lowest score means in organisational justice

No.	Statement	Mean	SD
1	Candidates' opinions about selection are considered by the top management in the MOE.	2.60	1.308
2	There is a system of information and history for all employees which helps MOE to select the best candidates.	2.32	1.323
3	Employees get fair training programmes which give them fair chances in the selection processes.	2.31	1.418
4	Candidates' suggestions are taken into consideration in developing selection processes in the MOE.	2.28	1.270
5	The MOE withdraws any selection decision if any candidates appeal against it before they go to court.	2.24	1.336
6	All candidates get feedback on the result of their application for a supervisory position.	2.19	1.340

The table shows the lowest scores of means in organisational justice. On a general view, the table shows that participants feel that their opinions and suggestions are not considered by the officials of these panels. Likewise, participants are dissatisfied by the feedback on the outcome of these, as well as with the MOE's policy not to undo any decision for any reason. Finally, the lack of a system which saves candidates' history and helps the panels to select the best candidates, alongside an unclear system of training programmes which would qualify employees to get fair chances in selection processes, cause dissatisfaction.

5.4 Differences between participants according to demographic variables

In this section, the researcher will examine the null and alternative hypothesis regarding relationships between different demographic variables.

5.4.1 Gender

This section investigates whether there are significant differences between male and female according to the main variables of the web survey. To test the null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between male and female according to the web survey variables, and the alternative hypothesis: there is a significant difference between male and female, the T-test

was used to test the hypothesis at the level of .95%. **Table 5.24** shows the findings of the T-test.

Table 5.24 The T-test findings of different the main variables in the web survey

Variable	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	Sig.
Culture	male	3.51	.490	.691	.490
	female	3.47	.444		
Employees	male	3.73	.409	.921	.358
	female	3.69	.495		
Top officers	male	3.64	.477	.222	.824
	female	3.65	.496		
External factors	male	3.91	.527	1.61	.107
	female	3.83	.474		
Distributive justice	male	3.13	.699	.117	.907
	female	3.12	.557		
Procedural Justice	male	3.18	.654	.900	.369
	female	3.27	.681		
Interactional Justice	male	2.73	.759	.285	.776
	female	2.76	.566		

Table 5.24 shows that an independent T-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference between male and female in the main variables of the web survey . The findings show that there is no significant difference between male and female regarding culture, employees, top officers, external factors, or distributive, procedural and interactional justice. Thus, the findings suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female in any variable of the web survey .

5.4.2 Work Experience

This section investigates whether there is a significant difference according to work experience. The goal of determining the differences of means over the four groups of work experience was realised by performing a one-way repeated measure Anova at the level of .95%. A one-way Anova was performed to compare overall means in selection processes and

organisational justice across the four groups of work experience. **Table 5.25** shows the one-way Anova findings for the two groups: selection processes and organisational justice.

Table 5.25 One-Way Anova for work experience

	Years group	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Selection processes	0-4	3.89	.313	4.16	.006
	5-14	3.66	.347		
	15-20	3.66	.299		
	21 or more	3.63	.302		
	Total	3.66	.315		
Organisational justice	0-4	4.01	.570	4.26	.006
	5-14	3.21	.442		
	15-20	3.22	.513		
	21 or more	3.18	.514		
	Total	3.2274	.514		

The findings of **Table 5.25** show that the group (0-4) has the highest mean in both categories: selection processes and organisational justice. The other three groups (5-14) (15-20) and (21 or more) are most likely the same in both categories, with higher total means in selection processes. Moreover, the findings in the table suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between the work experience groups in selection processes ($F=4.16$, $p=.006$) and organisational justice ($F=4.26$, $p=.006$). Post hoc comparisons using Hochberg indicated that the work experience group 0-4 ($M=3.89$, $SD=.313$) is significantly different from other work experience groups. These results intersperse that work experience statistically influences the perception of fairness in selection processes in favour of the lowest work experience group. These findings will be explained in detail in chapter six, the discussion chapter.

5.4.3 Academic Qualifications

This section explores whether there are statistically significant differences according to academic qualifications. A one-way Anova is used to determine any difference of means across

the four types of academic qualification: PhD, Master's, Bachelor's, and Diploma. **Table 5.26** shows the findings of the one-way Anova according to academic qualifications.

Table 5.26 One-Way Anova for academic qualifications

	Qualification	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Selection processes	Doctorate	3.55	.205	.844	.470
	Master's	3.66	.318		
	Bachelor's	3.65	.309		
	Diploma	3.70	.367		
	Total	3.66	.315		
Organisational justice	Doctorate	3.20	.421	.603	.614
	Master's	3.19	.519		
	Bachelor's	3.22	.472		
	Diploma	3.38	.766		
	Total	3.22	.514		

The findings of **Table 5.26** intersperse that there is no statistically significant difference in the variable of selection processes ($F=.844$, $p=.470$) or of organisational justice ($F=.603$, $p=.614$). The findings indicate that academic qualifications have no statistically significant influence on the perception of fairness in selection processes and organisational justice.

5.4.4 Title of Position

This section investigates whether there is a significant difference according to the title of the position. For the analysis, the 15 positions are classified into three groups by status of position, based on the classifying table of positions which was issued by the Council of Civil Service in 29/10/2010. The first group, senior officers, includes: advisors, general directors, assistant general directors and experts. The second group is middle management, which includes department directors, assistant department directors and heads of sections. The third group consists of employees, which includes the rest of the positions. **Table 5.27** shows the results of a one-way Anova measurement test.

Table 5.27 One-Way Anova results for titles of positions

Position	M	SD	F	Sig.
Senior officers	3.57	.343	1.064	.346
Middle management	3.64	.304		
Employees	3.67	.317		
Total	3.66	.315		

Table 5.27 proposes that there is no significant difference in the means for titles of positions at the $p < .05$ level for the three levels (top officers, middle management, and employees ($F=1.064$, $p=.346$). The findings propose that there is no statistically significant difference between the employees at different managerial levels in their perceptions of justice in the selection processes at the MOE.

5.4.5 Apply for the positions

This section explores the question of whether there is a statistically significant difference between employees who applied and employees who did not apply for the supervisory position. An independent-samples T-test is used to compare the differences in means between employees who apply for supervisory positions and employees who did not apply for these positions. **Table 5.28** shows the results of the T-test.

Table 5.28 T-test results for the difference between employees who did and did not apply

Apply	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Yes	245	3.66	.318	.109	.913
No	193	3.65	.313		

The findings of **Table 5.28** suggest that there is no significant difference between employees who apply and those who do not apply ($F= .109$, $p=.913$). According to the results, there is no difference in perception of selection processes between those who do and do not apply.

5.4.6 Place of work

This section examines whether the place of work makes a statistically significant difference to the results for the different participants of this study. To examine the differences in means, one-way Anova is used to compare the means for the place of work.

Table 5.29 One-Way Anova for difference of means regarding place of work

Place of Work	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Central Office	3.6675	.33173	1.156	.316
Muscat	3.6644	.29532		
Dhofar	3.7559	.34791		
Batinah North	3.7432	.26943		
Batinah South	3.6744	.37764		
Dakhiliyah	3.6628	.24548		
Sharqiyah South	3.6962	.30300		
Sharqiyah North	3.6165	.34755		
Dhahirah	3.6339	.28771		
Buraimi	3.6108	.24414		
Musandam	3.4849	.27653		
Wusta	3.5811	.39983		
Total	3.6614	.31572		

Table 5.29 shows that there are no significant differences between group means as determined by one-way Anova ($F=1.156$, $p=.316$). These findings suggest that place of work has no effect on perceptions of justice in selection processes at the MOE.

5.5 Summary of the quantitative findings

In this chapter, the web survey of this study was analysed to explore the perceptions of employees at different hierarchical levels about the current practices of selection processes in the MOE. The web survey is divided into two main sections: selection processes and organisational justice. The first part, which was filled in by all participants, explored the main themes of this study: culture (national - organisation), identity and group membership, and power relationships. The second part was about organisational justice and it was filled in only

by the candidates who applied for these supervisory positions, to explore how they perceived organisational justice in these processes.

The first part provides demographic information on the participants of the study. The findings of the second part suggest that the culture, whether national or organisational, has an important role in shaping participants' perceptions of selection processes. The same is true of relationships and how these relationships can positively influence candidates' chances in these processes. Having said that, the participants believe that relationships with senior officers have more influence than relationships with outsiders like known families.

The participants highly prefer in-group candidates to out-group candidates. Moreover, participants are aware that high self-ambitions and past experiences of failure influence participants' perceptions of selection processes. Another key fact to remember is that the general directors and the panels, whether in the central or the governorates, influence how participants perceive the selection processes. In the third part, the participants were asked to rank who was responsible for their perceptions of selection processes (participants themselves, department or section, Ministry's culture, or national culture). The participants ranked themselves first as the party responsible for their perceptions, reflecting their awareness of their role as the basic force shaping their perceptions. The second most influential factor is the place of work, then the MOE's culture and finally the national culture. These findings will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

The findings of the fourth part, about organisational justice, reveal that the interactional justice overall mean is lower than those for distributive and procedural justice. This indicates that participants are dissatisfied with interactional justice in these processes. For example, all the lower means statements focus on not receiving feedback or not considering participants' suggestions or opinions about selection processes in the MOE.

The final part tested whether there are differences between the means of the groups according to gender, work experience, academic qualifications, level of position, workplace, and whether or not the participants have applied. The findings intersperse that, regarding gender, there is no difference between male and female in all main variables of the web survey. The work experience item shows a significant difference between (0-4) years compared with other work experience groups. There is no significant difference according to academic qualifications. Similarly, the three levels (senior – middle management – employees) show no significant difference between them. The workplace also produces no significant differences between the participants of the study. Finally, the comparison between the group means of participants who applied for supervisory positions and those who did not apply for these positions show that there are no significant differences between the two groups.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the analysis of the quantitative data of this study. The participants were asked to answer 67 questions, grouped within seven main variables of the study, by a 1-5 Likert scale, and question 39 ranking the main factors that determined who or what was responsible for participants' perceptions of justice in selection processes. The findings intersperse that the culture, either national or organisational, has an important role in this perception. Having said that, the findings in Q.39 show that participants considered themselves to have more responsibility than the organisational or national culture. Power relationships have an influence on how participants evaluate fairness in these processes.

However, the findings propose that relationships with seniors inside the organisation were more crucial in these processes than relationships with known families or seniors from outside the MOE. The findings for organisational justice show that interactional justice has a lower mean than distributive or procedural justice. The results of this chapter will be discussed

in chapter seven, in combination with qualitative findings to gain a deep understanding of the current practices of selection processes in the MOE. The following chapter presents the findings of the qualitative data of this study, which were collected by interviews with different participants from different hierarchical levels at the central office and governorates, to obtain further insights into the selection processes in the MOE.

Chapter Six Qualitative analysis

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the quantitative data. In this chapter, the discussion is about the findings of the qualitative data of this study. The qualitative data were gathered by conducting interviews with employees in different hierarchical positions in the central office and the directorates. The interview questions were designed by the researcher based on the literature review which was discussed in chapter three in this study. The interviews were semi-structured, with questions related to the main dimensions of this study – culture, social identity, power, organisational justice – and the ways these structures the perceptions of employees about selection processes in the MOE. The methodology which was followed in the interviews and the selection of participants was discussed in detail in chapter four of this study(see section 4.8.2). The qualitative data were analysed by using thematic content analysis which depends on generating categories from the data under the themes of the study.

This chapter is about presenting the key findings of the qualitative data under the main themes of the study using quotes from the interviews to illustrate the findings. This chapter will be followed by a discussion chapter combining the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis will be deepened to understand and interpret the findings in relationship to the selection practices in the MOE.

6.2 Process of data analysis

The data analysis followed four steps: transcription of the interviews, translating the transcript to English, identifying themes and codes them, and interpreting the data.

6.2.1 Transcription of the interviews

All the interviews were in Arabic; therefore, the first step was making transcripts of all interviews. The researcher uses in this stage the memos to take notes of every step followed. Then To ensure the rigour of my interpretation of the transcript of the interviews, a colleague whose first language is Arabic scrutinized my interpretation of the transcriptions.

6.2.2 Translating the interviews from Arabic to English

In this stage, all transcripts were translated into English. All initial translations into English with equivalent forms in Arabic were sent to lecturers, who teach English as a second language and whose mother tongue is Arabic, to check the accuracy of the translation.

6.2.3 Coding and themes

All the transcripts were read and reread, and notes were made in the process. In addition, Nvivo12 was used to analyse the data. The analysis started with open coding to review the words featured in the transcripts. Then, an initial coding gathered all words and phrases indicating the same meaning. After that, the codes were checked to delete all similar or overlapping codes, grouping similar codes together to generate the main themes of the analysis.

6.2.4 Interpreting the findings

The final stage of the data analysis is the interpretation of the data. In this stage, the researcher gathers all the data in a more coherent and organized way. The researcher reflects on the data in an effort to understand and interpret the findings of the study.

6.3 Themes of the study

In this section, the main themes of the study will be discussed, using quotes from the interviews to illustrate the findings under each theme.

6.3.1 Selection Procedures

The participants were asked about their evaluation of the current practices of selection for supervisory positions in the MOE. Most of the participants in the three hierarchical levels, senior, middle and junior, believed that the selection processes have developed in the MOE. However, they differ in their evaluation of current practices. The quotes from the seniors' interviews showed that nearly 80% were satisfied and 20% dissatisfied. The satisfied participants among the senior officers stated the following:

We were happy that the competition procedures changed, to become less subjective and more systematic. It provided a sort of justice among the staff (Senior Staff 1).

Now it has evolved by applying the criteria in phases and this, of course, that is better (Senior Staff 2).

The process has developed so that now it has become the selection by a group of experts rather than one opinion (Senior Staff 5).

On the other hand, the dissatisfied came from those who believed that these procedures need to develop, especially in regard to the content of the CV, and that the procedures were only there to protect the MOE from cases in the Administrative Court.

The creation of a climate of justice is good and the rules are necessary, but these measures were only available to protect the MOE, and the local and Central committees were designed to protect the MOE; but at the same time it creates a sense of satisfaction among the staff (Senior Officer 6).

The procedures do not always select the best candidate. One reason is that the CV appraisal can raise their marks even if they get lower scores in the interviews (Senior Staff 4)

The second group is the middle management group which had more diverse views on the evaluation of the processes than the other two groups. More than 40% agreed that the selection processes have a positive impact:

The practices are excellent, and it selected the best candidates (Middle Management 10).

Good procedures, and the criteria are also good. The CV, the interview and the current procedures give a chance for all employees, either in the

directorate or the schools, to compete and it is objective (Middle Management 11).

The MOE has taken leading steps in the selection process (Middle Management 9).

These quotes show that some of the middle management participants have positive perceptions about these processes. On the other hand, 30% of the participants in this group have negative perceptions not about the process itself but the wrong practices during these procedures:

Previously it was by nomination by the General Director; today it is the same, but it is protected by a legislative and legal framework (Middle Management 1).

There is manipulation in the application (Middle Management 4).

Sometimes you feel that the procedures are designed to favour certain candidates from the MOE (Middle Management 5).

These quotes indicate that the negative perceptions came from the practices of the Director General when implementing these processes, or sometimes the impression that job requirements were deliberately set to favour particular candidates. For the most part, these feelings are not based on concrete evidence, but rather arise from hearing colleagues in the same department or directorate.

The other 30% of the participants in the middle management were more neutral about these processes where they believed the selection is based on personal preferences and protecting the MOE from legal cases:

Every official is careful to select the right person, but this choice is not an institutional one; it is based on an individual perspective, focussing on personal orientations (Middle Management 1).

The MOE has many complaints and cases in the Administrative Court of Justice and the MOE had to activate a law in the civil service (Middle Management 12).

If we evaluate the process, in theory, it adheres to the procedures and the framework for the operation, but if we enter the details, we discover some gaps every year that

were supposed to change. I believe it depends on the personal perspective of the one who is in charge. How long it will continue, and whether it is a planned phase in developing the interviews and the CVs; or whether it will change after a while – we have no idea and we have to wait and see (Middle Management 8).

It can be noticed that there remains a concern about interference of personal preferences rather than objective preferences in the selection processes. Sixty percent of the total mark is divided into two interviews, one in the directorate and the other in the central office. Those participants felt that senior officers' personal preferences could influence the members of the panels.

The third group, consisting of participants from the junior staff, is divided fifty-fifty between positive and negative perceptions of the selection processes. The participants who have positive perceptions believed that these processes developed and progressed for the better:

The procedures have improved for the better (Junior Staff 5).

There is progress in the selection processes (Junior Staff 6).

It was previously by nominations, but now through stages which is better for all candidates (Junior Staff 7).

On the other hand, the participants who have negative perceptions stated:

Current procedures are routine. These procedures do not give candidates equal proportions in all opportunities (Junior Staff 1).

The procedures are not consistent (Junior Staff 4).

I do not have much knowledge about it, but I noticed it was unfair (Junior Staff 1).

Compared with the middle management group the dissatisfaction in this group was more in the procedures rather than General Directors' practices. It could be said that this group have no direct link with the Director General and their daily actions, so they do not exert influence on them. This indicates that middle management, who are linked directly to the

General Directors, are influenced by their practices more than junior staff who do not have a direct link with them.

Thus, the three hierarchical groups believed that these processes have developed, however, they differ in their assessment of current practices in the MOE. It is clear that middle management had more diverse opinions than the other groups. The top senior staff believed more in the positive side of these processes, where in the junior staff half of the participants believed the same and the other half had a negative feeling of these procedures. The negativity of procedures is perceived differently in middle management and junior staff. In middle management, the main cause of negativity is the practices of the General Directors, whereas among the junior officers, the negativity is perceived in the procedures themselves.

6.3.2 Culture

In this section, the responses of the participants about the culture will be presented in order to answer three questions: 1) What has more influence on employees' perceptions, is it organisational or social culture? 2) Is the influence positive, negative or neutral? 3) What are the manifestations of social and organisational culture on employees regarding the selection processes in the MOE?

The responses for the first question revealed that seventy percent of the participants in the three levels, senior, middle management, and junior, believed that the organisation's culture has more influence than social culture:

Of course, the organisation's culture influences employees, for example, many times we had discussions with friends and each one defends his/her organisation while the others see only the cons (Junior Staff 3).

In this phase, the criteria became clearer for the candidates, but the organisation culture is still interfering negatively with perceptions about the selection process (Middle Management 12).

The culture of the organisation has a major influence. Before there were no criteria for selection, but now the clarity of the procedures through the committees, it appears that we have a good ratio of satisfaction among the employees (Senior Staff 3).

Having said that, twenty percent of the participants believed that social culture has more influence than organisation culture:

Yes, social culture affects the MOE's culture greatly (Middle Management 13).

The whole issue depends on the culture that we live in (Senior Staff 1).

Coupled with higher influences by the social and the organisation culture, ten percent of the participants believed that the two have the same influence:

In the MOE, there is a general culture and we cannot differentiate between the social culture and the culture of the organisation (Middle Management 12).

I think the preference for some employees come from the organisation culture and the culture of the society (Middle Management 2).

The next question aims at evaluating the relationship between the social and organisation culture: Is it positive, negative or neutral? The last quotation from participants' interviews illustrates that for some of them the effect is neutral between the two cultures. However, some participants from different administrative levels believed that the social culture influenced the organisation's culture negatively:

Yes, unfortunately, the social culture influences the MOE's culture in a negative way, where the rumours affect employees' perceptions of justice (Middle Management 7).

The social culture significantly affects employees. In the case that an employee is promoted to a position and they don't have an idea about him/her, it would be linked to the attribution of his/her family's status or officials' relationships which is not true at all (Junior Staff 3).

I believe that all employees are from the same social culture, for some they reflect the positive side of the social culture, where others reflect the negative side, so we can't generalize about it (Middle Management 11).

Well for examples in the private sector, they are independent and force their rules and they are profitable organisations with all rules and laws; but with the public organisations, it is influenced more by the cultural dimensions (Middle Management 10).

By comparison, the last two quotations from middle management showed that it is more related to employees rather than the social culture. The last quotation gave an example of a

comparison between the public and the private organisations in the same social culture, where the private sector is more successful than the public.

The last question is about the indicators of the influence of social and organisation culture on the employees. From the previous quotations in this section, it appears that the participants from the three administrative levels believed that social culture influences employees through spreading rumours, attribution for unreal links and generalisation of unconnected events:

I believe it is our social culture that leads our thinking that each successful candidate is the best and is supposed to win, and others are not (Senior Staff 7).

The social culture influences our thinking, making generalisations from unconnected events (Junior Staff 6).

Yes, unfortunately, the social culture influences the MOE's culture in a negative way, where the rumours affect employees' perceptions of justice (Middle Management 7).

The next part of the question is about the link between organisational culture and employees' perceptions. Different views from different levels stated that:

In the organisation culture, the norms of awareness and objectivity and competition should be spread between employees (Senior Staff 4).

The organisation culture increased the lack of clarity in the implementation of these selection procedures (Middle Management 2).

The rumours are still there, where it is believed in the organisation culture that some candidates are preferable than other candidates in the selection processes, but if they apply for these jobs they will feel that good procedures are followed (Middle Management 10).

The organisation culture affects daily practices, where sometimes senior officials use double standards in terms of practising the law on some, while the others are not considered equal even when the two positions are at the same level of employment (Middle Management 9).

It is the personal views of the senior officials and the culture of the organisation that focuses on a specific person and discounts the abilities of others (Middle Management 1).

In the organisation culture, it may be problematic, with the senior officials' opinions and minds affecting their judgement. Any candidate should have features which are fitted with the position which of course, but this is not written; rather, it is hidden in their unconscious of the perfect candidate (Senior Staff 2).

The above comments highlight how the organisation culture influences employees. The main influences are the lack of clarity of goals, objectivity with all candidates, unified and consistent standards for all candidates, the personal views of senior staff and how it could influence the objectivity of selecting the best candidates for these positions.

Two of the participants gave good examples of how some norms could influence the selection procedures in the MOE. The first example is about the agreement between employees for a candidate, especially the senior one, and it would break the norms of the group if anyone except that candidate applies for the position:

As a norm in the organisation culture, it exists between employees, you are senior in this section and you deserve it better than me, even though it is not stated in the job requirements (Middle Management 10).

The second example comes from the senior officer about unwillingness to write any comments on the performance of the employees. In accordance with the norm in the organisation culture, the senior would not want to confront staff, who at the same time prefer that all comments be verbal rather than written. This would create a challenge for the committees to investigate the candidates and they can find only the official approval which is the annual report of the candidates:

You will not find any comments on anyone because all the notes are verbal and not written, for example, if the chairman of the Committee noticed any behaviour, you will not find anything written as evidence, you will not find a trace. Any writing would be documented, and, in our culture, we are not responsible, and I always want to be in safe mode with my relationships with others even if they are wrong. The other thing, the employee would blame you for documenting against him, so the first one does not want a confrontation, and the other does not want to write about it. The social culture creates challenges because in taking notes I will take responsibility; so everyone avoids it (Senior Officer 1).

Thus, in this section the culture was investigated first by exploring the three administrative levels: senior, middle management and junior staff. It appears that middle management has more diverse opinions than senior and junior staff. According to the participants of this study, organisational culture has more influence than national culture in objectivity, clarity of the goals, using unified standards for all candidates and influence of some of the General Directors on the fairness of candidate selection. Another key thing to note is that national culture influences employees in terms of rumours and generalisation. The relationship between the social and organisational culture was explored, and it was found that for some participants the influence was negative, and for others, neutral. Finally, two examples represent some of the norms which spread in the organisation culture and their links to the selection processes in the MOE.

6.3.3 Preferences for gender, academic qualifications, relationships with senior officers, and elite families

The participants' responses in the three different levels are explored to find out if there is any kind of preference for selecting candidates. The participants in the three levels have different views of the preference for the candidates in selection processes regarding their gender, academic qualifications, relationships with senior officers and elite families.

The senior staff believed that there is no kind of preference for any candidates during the selection processes. Some of them agreed that because of the nature of social relationships, sometimes there are recommendations not only from outside the MOE but also from inside the MOE. The senior officers confirmed that if the recommendations exist, there will be no preference for any candidate over others during the processes of selection for supervisory positions. Also, one of the senior participants stated that the existence of auditing authorities is the reason for not favouring any candidate in the selection processes.

For the governorate committee through three years there is no power pressure either from the officials or elite families for selecting any candidate. Each member of the team puts his/her points without pressure and there is no impact

of relationships in the committee's decision (Senior Staff 2).

In every track there may appear to be influences external to the procedures, but with the existence of an auditing organisation that monitors the performance of the institution, the official is fearful of selection according to any preferences (Senior Staff 7).

I do not think elite families create such pressure to select a candidate, but the recommendation is they are either from the social or the directorate. However, the pursuit of justice has not affected perceptions. The committee had not been pressured by any officials in the MOE and the social elite to nominate anyone for these jobs (Senior Staff 6).

The middle management participants views can be categorized in two groups: more than 80% of the participants believed that there is no preference, however, 20% of the participants believed that there is a preference. Half of them believed the preference would take place if the candidates are equal only.

The first group who believed that these preferences do not exist in the selection processes in the MOE stated that:

I didn't feel there was a preference for gender, academic qualifications, families, and relationships with officials (Middle Management 6).

I am against the idea of the interference of elite families and officials and it has no effect, as well as preferences for gender or academic qualifications. I expect after the ministerial decision, no one will interfere, and I did not witness or hear any cases here in the governorate (Middle Management 4).

At the beginning of the government, preferences could have had an effect, but now it is done in a different way (Middle Management 12).

The second group who believed that some of these preferences could influence the selection, in most responses there is no total agreement in these features: one believed that the Director General decides which preferences to use, another believed that relationships with a superior would help:

All the preferences for gender, relationships with superiors and elite families, depend on the Director General and let us arrange it, first the elite families on the condition that it be related to General Director's interests, for example if the candidate is from a family close to another official, which gives him personal advantage so the

candidate will be nominated regardless of other considerations (Middle Management 4).

It could be also influenced through his acquaintance with a central committee member, which increases his/her chances of being nominated (Middle Management 9).

Half of the participants who believed in the existence of these preferences believed that relationships would influence the final decision of selection if the candidates are equal in all points in the CVS and interviews:

Of course, there are criteria, but if two candidates have the same total mark, the ones who have relationships would be selected and we cannot deny the existence of these practices (Middle Management 14).

If the candidates are equal, preference is given to the relationship of the families. The tribal influence, therefore, has priority, but without any proof in papers for this preference, even though in some cases these preferences did not influence the selection (Middle Management 13).

The junior staff have the same views as middle management but with different percentages. Nearly 60%, which is less than middle management, believed there is no preference for any feature during these processes:

I haven't seen a case since my appointment, but I've heard so many times (Junior Staff 3).

Currently, the positions are open for all employees and there is no differentiation in the gender, academic qualification and family orientation among employees (Junior Staff 1).

However, 40% of the participants believed that there is a preference during selection processes. The participants like middle management did not agree in a specific preference during selection processes:

The qualifications have a preference, and the relationships are very influential in preferring some employees to each other. Regardless of competences, those who can market themselves correctly overcome the most efficient. The families have a role but the final preference is in the hands of the General Directors (Junior Staff 5).

Yes, there is a clear example that a top officer selected an employee for a position which means that relationships have a role in the selection processes. It may be that from his/her point of view, they are confident of their abilities because

this candidate worked with them, but that doesn't mean that the opportunity exists for the one who worked them only (Junior Staff 6).

Finally, an example of the part of the interview with one of the junior staff participants clarifies how employees link external events with selection processes even if there is no link between the two events:

Researcher: What about other factors?

Participant: The social status has a role, regarding the supervisory positions; it depends on whether the candidate is close to a known person or an elite family.

Researcher: Have you ever had a situation since you started your appointment in the MOE that an employee was appointed in a position because he/she has a relationship with elite family or know a person?

Participant: No

Researcher: You may have heard about it?

Participant: No, I haven't heard about any regarding supervisory positions.

Researcher: On what basis did you make this impression?

Participant: Because it exists; just because I don't have any evidence, it doesn't mean it's not true.

Researcher: How does it exist?

Participant: [Laugh]... How to tell you.... I'll give you an example of social status and its influence on power. An officer was invited to a dinner with one of the elite families, the son of this elite family had a problem in this officer's organisation. The father asked the officer to help the son and the officer was in a bad situation: either to stand by the rules and he would be blamed because he did not help the elite family's son, and he was new and he wants support from the social elite; or to help their son. In the end, the officer decided to help him.

Researcher: Why did you link this incident with selection in the supervisory position?

Participant: I know that social status has power in the MOE.

Researcher: Do employees tend to generalize everything they encounter with the practices inside the MOE?

Participant: Yes, it is possible to find a correlation between events and may be due to the social culture.

From my experience, this example clarifies how in many cases you can find employees linking external events with the practices inside the organisation and at the same time make an assessment of selection practices in light of these external events. Thus, it seems that senior staff believed more than the other two groups that there are no preferences during the selection processes. Having said that, the senior staff do not ignore the existing of recommendations because of the nature of the social order, but it does not interfere with justice between employees during selection processes. The middle management and junior staff have the same

perceptions of any existing preferences during these processes. The participants have different views of the type of preference, but they believed that relationships are the strongest preference during the selection processes. It is also noteworthy that participants believed in the powerful authority of General Directors in these processes.

6.3.4 In-group and out-group candidates

This section is about how the participants feel the vacancies should be filled: Is it from inside candidates? What about outside candidates? Moreover, another question worth asking is, is it a general rule to fill the vacancies with inside candidates, or are there other considerations in play to fill these vacancies? On the reaction when someone is appointed either from the inside or an outside group, the senior staff stated that:

Employees standby with candidates from their department or sections and support the candidate from their department because they want him/her to fill the vacancy and to be considered the right choice (Senior Staff 1).

It is possible if a candidate from the section or the department has the charisma and understands the work but if not, the selection goes to the candidates who are competent and from outside the department (Senior Staff 3).

If the section has technical side and especially in the curriculum, it is supposed to be the candidates who have experience in the area, but if it was a purely administrative section and the qualification is not important the position can be opened for people outside the section to apply for it (Senior Staff 4).

The quotations show that senior staff are aware that employees prefer the internal candidates and, more than that, they would stand with their colleague. Moreover, some of the senior staff make conditions to select candidates from the same section or department: the first one is that the candidate should be the competent and the other condition is that the section or department needs a specialist; otherwise the position can be open for all candidates.

The third question is about the reactions from employees when they are not selected. The senior staff believed that the post-selection aspects could create a challenge for some directorates: some candidates resign from the MOE, and others campaigning for changing the

workplace and sometimes deliberately waste the time of the seniors by complaining often, which can take months after selection to find a solution.

Some candidates are qualified and competent, but their application is rejected because they do not have the required academic qualification, and this led them to resign (Senior Staff 3).

One of the effects of the selection is that the candidate who is not chosen applies to change his/her place of work because he/she cannot stay in the same section; this procedure takes time to find a solution for the candidate and sometimes it lasts for three months (Senior Staff 1).

Most of the junior staff preferred the vacancies filled with candidates from inside the departments or section, however, at the same time they had different responses if the outside candidate is more competent than inside one:

Frankly, we don't like to have a candidate from outside because the people of Mecca knows about its structure. Those who are in the department understand well how business is running – we will not accept a manager from outside the department (Junior Staff 2).

I think it should be categorised in two levels: the head of section can be nominated from inside or outside the department, I don't mind a candidate from outside the section, on one condition, that he/she can run the section and he/she can head the employees; but for director and assistant director, these should be limited to the same department (Junior Staff 3).

This question has a positive side and a negative side. The positive side is when the candidate is from the same department, he/she is familiar with the situations and attended all the courses, so they could benefit the section more; on the other side, some sections and departments need new blood to change the situations, so it has a positive and negative side (Junior Staff 6).

The above quotations highlight the opinions of junior staff where some believed that these vacancies should be filled with only candidates from the same sections or departments; while other participants allow opportunities for outside candidates, provided they are qualified and compete for the head of sections positions only. Here is an example to illustrate how the employees deal with new candidate in the section:

Depending on how the new candidate from the department treats other

employees, because relationships have a role in their acceptance of him/her compared with the outside candidate. If the candidate from the department has no strong relationships, the priority would go with the candidate from outside the department (Junior Staff 4).

This example clarifies that even if the candidate is a member of an in-group, they still require good relations with other employees in the section to maintain cooperation.

The third group is the middle management, and the most interesting in some responses, giving the reasons why in some cases employees prefer candidates from inside rather than outside candidates:

This exists but sometimes when a person has a good reputation the verdict differs; but in general, the staff prefers an internal candidate for fear of not being in harmony with the new candidate (Middle Management 12).

Perhaps the understanding of candidates from the inner department is greater than the from outside the department (Middle Management 14).

The staff members tend to like the head of the section who is flexible with them and do not like those who apply the laws on them but unfortunately, there will be no productivity (Middle Management 3).

Each case differs: if there is a competent candidate and has good leadership from inside the department he/she will be selected but if we don't have that candidate, the outside candidate will be preferable (Middle Management 9).

Some positions have candidates who have been acting as a head of section for several years, so when the position is advertised you could find a candidate competing them with little experience and there is no comparison between them (Middle Management 7).

The middle management participants offered a mixture of reasons why the employees prefer inside candidates rather than outside candidates. The participants pointed out that the preference for inside candidates could be referred to the fear of dealing with the new head of section who had not to dealt with them before, so they prefer the candidate who is familiar. Another interesting reason is that employees preferred the head who is more lenient with them which could be an issue for the work productivity in the MOE.

The last quotation expresses that in some positions still vacant for years, there is an employee from the section or department who has been acting as head of section, in addition to his/her work duties. However, it can happen that when the selection is made to appoint the head, a new candidate is successful and the employee who had spent years failed in the interviews. Some employees consider it an injustice for him/her and that the priority to fill the vacancy should be for that employee. This example shows that dissatisfaction of selection practices can come as a result of incorrect administrative practices in the MOE.

In conclusion, this section explores participants' views about preference for gender, academic qualification, elite family and relationships. Most of the participants believed there is no preference during selection processes in the MOE. Yet there are participants who believe that relationships are the most important preference among other preferences. Participants prefer inside candidates for many reasons such as fear of an unknown candidate, in-group understanding and preference for more flexible superiors. With this in mind, there are existing practices such as delaying filling vacancies for a long time, influencing negatively the selection processes in the MOE.

6.3.5 External factors

In this section, we will explore participants' views about the Civil Service Law and existence of administrative units which do not work under the Civil Service Law.

6.3.5.1 Civil Service Law (CVL)

The junior staff agreed that CVL is important to the governmental units and they stated:

I know it's the civil service system, but the Minister could change some of these things as far as I know (Junior Staff 2).

My point is not, on the contrary, the civil service laws are better than these bodies. I had discussions with different employees from different governmental units and the comparisons are weak in favour of the MOE (Junior Staff 6).

Some of the junior staff have misunderstood that the Minister has the authority to overcome the CVL which is untrue; the Ministers have no right to make an exception for any article in the law. On the other hand, some participants believed that CVL is more advantageous than other governmental units which have independent systems. This positive view of CVL reflects that some employees believe that CVL suits these Ministries.

The senior staff have varying views about the CVL. They stated:

The CVL is a barrier for all ministries and it should be updated, large organisations like the MOE, which has more than 80 thousand employees, cannot be handled by the same law for a ministry that has only five thousand employees (Senior Staff 10).

Civil Service Law and regulations are easy, but human interactions keep the problem, the law gives all the units the freedom to apply for these positions (Senior Staff 1).

Any law or regulation is considered a barrier because it filters the candidates as well as organises the relationships between different parties. However, without the law it would be worse, so anything in the organisation is inherently a barrier, but it is so positive that it organizes as stated earlier (Senior Staff 4).

The Civil Service Law procedures have allowed employees to compete for these vacancies, so if these regulations are neglected, the employees will sue the MOE (Senior Staff 6).

Like the junior staff, there is no agreement of the CVL. Some participants look for it as a barrier for a large organisation like the MOE; other senior staff look to it as regulator and organise the nature of the relationship between different parties in the MOE accordingly. For some participants, CVL protects employees' rights in competing for vacancies in the MOE.

The middle management also has varying views about CVL. Some of the participants have a negative attitude toward CVL:

For the Civil Service, many studies stated that the law is passive and should be developed in many details (Middle Management 12).

We can say that the law is absent rather than a support or a barrier to these processes. The spirit of the law should overcome the law (Middle Management 8).

The fact that we have more competent employees, but they do not apply because of the lack of incentives. For example, even if you get promoted to a head of section,

an assistant director or department director your salary will be decreased. Perhaps in this respect the law is a constraining factor (Middle Management 2).

The participants believed that CVL is old and needs to be changed, especially the fact that employees will lose incentives if they are appointed to these supervisory positions. Some of the competent employees prefer to stay with their title with fewer responsibilities and a higher salary. Having said that, there are middle management participants who believed that CVL has both the negative and positive sides, at the same time:

It is negative and positive, negative in terms of the requirements, where you have competent candidates but because of their financial grades the requirements do not fit with them. The irony is that the government delayed raising their financial grades and at the same time prohibited from applying for these positions, and the institution is losing a lot of candidates to delay their promotions; but on the positive side, they give points to the work experience and academic qualifications in selection processes (Middle Management 4).

Currently, CSL has a positive impact because of the following of standard procedures, but negative in the terms of the exception of appointments in certain departments in the MOE (Middle Management 4).

These two quotations provide examples in which the selection processes combined with incorrect administrative practices. The third group of middle management believed that CVL is a tool and a reference for the practices in the MOE:

The Civil Service Law is a reference in the selection process and the government units operate regulations based on this law. The financial degree is determined based on experience, the delay of promotions is not a problem of the Civil Service Law (Middle Management 7).

The law is a tool and you use it whenever and however you want. The problem is misunderstanding of the Civil Service Law to fill these positions and sending the wrong message to the rest of the staff for lack of justice (Middle Management 9).

The misunderstanding of the articles in the CVL in the daily practices in general and especially in selection processes could create many challenges to the governmental units, which lead to dissatisfaction of the employees in the MOE.

In conclusion, the views of the CVL are varied across the three administrative levels in the MOE. The CVL is viewed as a barrier, a supporter, a tool and a reference for all daily actions in the MOE. However, there is agreement that this law is important to regulate the relationships between different employees in different hierarchical levels in the MOE.

6.3.5.2 Independent Civil Authorities

This section will explore participants views regarding existing independent civil authorities which are self-governing from CVL and its relationship to perceptions of justice regarding selection processes in the MOE. Even these authorities are governmental, they have independent schemes of selection, promotions, and incentives. For this node, there is an agreement between the three administrative levels that the existence of these authorities would make a challenge for the ministries and the employees who work under CVL.

Surely if you have a fellow in these authorities who have a financial promotion every four years and you are doing the same job, that affects the employee's psychology (Junior Staff 4).

Of course, we should be affected as the employees in these units regularly have promotions and incentives but not the employees who work in the ministries (Junior Staff 7).

The employees in the ministries should be satisfied: when they compare their amount of work, it is less than what employees in these authorities offer; but when the work duties are greater, and my job incentives and salaries are smaller, the employees will be dissatisfied (Middle Management 1).

Supposedly all governmental units have the same salaries and promotions scheme as they work for the government (Middle Management 4).

When two employees with the same qualifications and the same job title, one appointed to a ministry and the other in these authorities, however, the salaries, the incentives and the post-service rewards are different in favour of these authorities, and this affects the employees (Middle Management 9).

It affects the employees because of the existence of these units with less work and more privileges (Senior Staff 2).

Surely there have been claims to unify these systems, because you are working in a state and it is necessary for justice (Senior Staff 3).

The previous quotations highlight the agreement between the three administrative levels regarding these existing authorities and the negative influence on employees in the ministries in general and particularly the selection processes.

6.3.6 Organisational Justice

In this section, the participants' views are explored regarding perceiving justice through the lenses of organisational justice in selection processes. The organisational justice is measured by exploring participants views about CVs, interviews, the timeline of the processes, and information and feedback. The views presented in this section will be only of the participants who had experience in applying for a position, as well as the member of committees either in the directorates or the central office.

6.3.6.1 CV

There is variance between participants in different administrative levels about the CV. Some participants believed that CV assessment is objective and differentiates between candidates; others believed that the outcome of this tool is not reflective of a process that selects the best candidates. The participants who believed in the value of the CV stated that:

The CV and the interview and the current procedures give a chance for all employees, either in the directorate or the schools, to compete, and it is objective (Middle Management 12).

The CV is an important tool where it identifies the candidate; also, it differentiates between a candidate who attends courses and prepares himself and another candidate who does not attend any course or has a higher certificate (Middle Management 3).

The CV currently includes academic certificates, training courses and work experiences, and the annual report which is good for the candidate (Senior Staff 3).

On the other hand, the participants who do not believe in the way CVs are used detailed that:

Unfortunately, the training is unrealistic. The CV is very important but does not reflect the reality and evolution of the work (Middle Management 12).

I feel it's an injustice to the candidate because the CV has only 30% from the total mark (Junior Staff 4).

The CV in its current form does not give a preference or indicator close to the truth and the CV form does not give the real or close value of the candidates. (Middle Management 8).

The process needs to be developed because it turns out that the degree of CV is not a criterion in selecting a good candidate (Senior Staff 2).

The best candidate is not always selected, one of the reasons is that the sum of the CV raises low efficiency candidates' points even if they get lower points in the interviews (Senior Staff 6).

The tone of the three administrative levels tends to have an agreement that the CV has pros and cons. The participants who believed in the CV argued that the current form includes all aspects of the employees which include academic qualifications, work experience, career progression, training courses, and annual report. By comparison, the participants who criticized the CV believed that it still showed the smart candidates who can collect the highest sum of points from the form rather than the efficient candidates in the MOE. For example, there is a critique that training courses in the CV can be filled by any courses whether they are relevant to the position or not:

The points for the courses in the form should be given to courses linked to the position only, not just any course can be included in the form. These courses give the committee a view of the participants who are prepared for the position, but on the current form the candidate can write any courses and gain points for them (Middle Management 8).

6.3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews are the second tool to evaluate the candidates during the selection processes. This tool depends on how the committee members evaluate the candidate. There are two committees, one in the directorate and one in the central office. The participants' views about the committees are important when exploring their views during the interview, which will influence their perceptions about justice in the selection processes.

The senior staff believed that there is no preference for any candidate during the interview. At the interview, all candidates are evaluated according to a standard form for all candidates. The senior staff stated about the interviews:

At the interview, the candidate evaluates his/her desire and readiness for the job and makes sure that he is not seeking it for social status or just satisfying a psychological need (Senior Staff 2).

The points of the interviews may make a difference in choice but there is no focus on a candidate (Senior Staff 3).

There is no agreement to nominate a candidate before the interviews. It is possible that before the interview there are discussions, but the members of the Committee are keen to deal with the candidates equally (Senior Staff 8).

The junior staff and middle management have different views about interviews. The main disadvantage of the interviews according to some participants is the subjectivity rather than objectivity:

I think that committees in the interviews are looking for a candidate with specific characteristics to be selected in these positions (Junior Staff 6).

The criteria should not be in the mind of the members but are translated into precise and detailed measurements and the interview criteria remain a formality and do not measure the real effectiveness of the candidate (Middle Management 6).

The preference for a candidate during interviews exists, members of the committees are more subjective rather than objective in the interviews (Middle Management 1).

Having said, other participants believed that the interviews were fair for them:

Yes, in both committees I feel satisfied, there was some appreciation of my experience (Middle Management 12).

In the central interview, they said you are the only candidate, but it does not mean you will take the job without passing the interview; they have clear, oriented procedures during the interview as well as their honesty of the outcome if I did not pass the interview (Middle Management 10).

There is no preference between the two committees, and I got a great impression from the respectful way of asking questions in both committees (Middle Management 11).

The last quotations show that some participants had a comfortable feeling about the interviews with both committees in the directorate and the central office. However, this is not

the case for all participants, some of them preferred the directorate and other preferred the central committee:

It was better in the governorate, deeper, more precise, also for comfort because these people had known you before (Middle Management 10).

I liked the directorate more because I knew all the candidates and they were familiar with our duties. I found answering these questions easy (Middle Management 5).

There is a difference between the MOE and the governorate, and the MOE is better because they are familiar with the whole governorates (Junior Staff 4).

For me, the central committee is more credible than the directorate committee (Middle Management 3)

The participants were asked to describe their experiences in the interview, either in the directorate or the central office:

The candidate may feel anxiety especially in the MOE because the membership of the governorate is well known to candidates, but in the MOE His Excellency and advisors and General Directors and advisors, that would make the candidate anxious (Middle Management 11).

Sometimes there is arguing with a candidate in the interview which should not take place; another concern is created when the chairman of the committee starts by giving the points to which other members are affected by giving the same marks (Junior Staff 6).

I felt that I was not wanted, through the questions asked by some members in the directorate (Middle Management 3).

One of the committee members agreed that some practices should not take place during the interview:

For example, when a member asked the candidate a question, sometimes members expanded on an argument with the candidate to clarify the matter during the interview (Middle Management 8).

Thus, the interview is an important tool during the selection processes. The senior staff believed that all members tried to be objective during the interview, however, junior and middle management believed that interviews are influenced by subjectivity or by superior influences on the members of the committees. Equally important are practices like controlling the timing

of the interview, debating with the candidates, and considering the candidate's psychology during the interview.

6.3.6.3 The timeline of the processes

Each process in any organisation should be set up with a timeline from beginning till the end of the processes. The participants were asked for the timeline of these processes:

The whole process took about two months: it took from two to three weeks from advertising till we had interview in the directorate, between the two interviews it took from 3-4 weeks (Middle Management 10).

The process was a long one: it took eight to nine months or more which negatively influenced the candidates' views about the selection (Middle Management 13).

We sat waiting four to six months for an interview at the central level. It was a summer vacation, and we didn't even have a holiday because we were waiting the central committee to come back to us any day with the interview time (Middle Management 3).

The senior staff believed that there is a delay in the processes of selection and that the challenge is not in the directorate but in the central committee:

Sometimes these processes take place at the end of the year and sometimes at the beginning of the year and you know the work jam, so when we have time, we do it (Senior Staff 1).

In our directorate we set a month and half of the highest period to send the names to the central committee (Senior Staff 3).

The time which is determined by the law is the advertising for 15 working days; for the interviews it depends on the directorates and the central committee (Senior Staff 4).

There is no time plan for the central committee because members of the committee are advisors and General Directorates of the central office and must be presided over by His Excellency and with the workload and the challenge to join all members, which is very difficult, and this leads to delays (Senior staff 9).

These quotations show that the timeline of these processes face challenges, especially in the central committee; also, it reveals that some directorates set up a time frame for these processes, but other directorates depend on the free time available to conduct the interviews.

6.3.6.4 Information and Feedback

During the processes of selection, the candidate should have opportunities to ask about any information during the processes. The availability of this information helps to overcome any speculations about the processes; also, all candidates should have access to any information available to any candidate during the process, especially when in some cases the process could take more than three or four months to select a candidate for the position.

There is no person, we were informed by someone about the interview in the Ministry (Middle Management 11).

Unfortunately, no, I asked the Director General for the feedback (Middle Management 12).

The Coordinator in the Director-General and our male colleagues had acquaintances in the MOE and he provided the news (Middle Management 14).

There is a coordinator who received the applications, but they were not specified (Senior Staff 1).

There is an employee who receives the applications and nothing more (Senior Staff 2).

Only if he asks, and for some, they know their abilities compared with the rest of the candidates and the results are known in advance, so they do not ask (Senior Staff 4).

These quotations highlight that in the current practice in the directorates, there is only an employee to receive the applications from the candidates; however, there is no appointed employee to give any feedback or information to the candidate. Therefore, the information and feedback are revealed only if the candidate asks or has a direct link to the members of the committees or has a colleague to get the information from the central office.

6.3.7 Directors General

Before the current practices of selection, General Directors used to nominate employees for these positions. Exploring how participants perceive the General Director's role in these practices is important to evaluate whether they interfere in these processes or not.

The Director General exercises power to object to a systemic process of selection

and uses his power in coordination with the central committee, but I have to say that it can be positive or negative (Junior Staff 5).

The Director General influences the other members in the committee where others cannot disagree with his/her selection, some General Directors do not influence the committees' members, while others have a huge influence on the committees (Middle Management 1).

The Director General sets it out in an indirect way, encouraging the candidate to apply, and these practices exist, and they are not bad especially for the potential candidate (Middle management 1).

It is possible for the Director General to interfere with the central committee by not appointing anyone in the vacancy, and the central committee is not obliged to explain the reason for that (Middle Management 14).

The participants believed that the General Directors still have influence in the selection processes, and that this influence can be practised through influencing other members in the interviews, coordinating with the central committee to not fill the vacancy, and indirectly encouraging candidates to apply for these positions.

Having said that, the participants believed that sometimes these practices have a positive side, especially for the potential candidates for these positions. Moreover, they believed these practices depend on the character of the General Directors, and, to some extent, the practice of the Director General varies from one directorate to the other.

6.3.8 Power

Power is one of the main issues regarding selection processes in the MOE. Through previous sections, the term 'power' was used to show how the power is exercised in the MOE. The senior staff believed that there are no power pressures from the social hierarchy. The two main powers – which in some cases are still exercised – mentioned in this chapter are the power of relationships and the General Director's position power, which was discussed in the previous section and will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the qualitative data of the study. The data of this study were collected by semi-structured interviews and the data were analysed by thematic content analysis. Each theme of the study was discussed in detail, supported by quotations from the interviews. The participants' views were explored through the main themes of the study: selection procedures, culture, preferences for gender-academic qualifications, relationships with senior staff and elite families, in-group and out-group candidates, external factors, organisational justice, General Directors, and power.

Chapter Seven Discussion of the findings

7.1 Introduction

Chapters five and six of this research examined the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter will now discuss, interpret and triangulate the findings from the survey and interviews in order to understand the internal selection processes in the MOE of Education with regard to the main concepts of the study: culture; identity and group membership; power; and organisational justice.

Ultimately, this chapter is about interpreting the key findings of the quantitative and qualitative data to answer the pivotal research questions of the study:

1- How are the internal selection procedures perceived by the senior staff, middle management, and junior staff?

A-How do the employees evaluate the internal selection process? Do they believe that these procedures create fairness and justice?

B-Is there a sense of nepotism and favouritism in the internal selection process?

2-What are the most important factors influencing internal selection processes in public organisations in Oman?

A-Do the cultures (social-organisational) influence employees' perceptions of justice?

B-Is there a relationship between employees' characteristics (gender-work status-work experience-qualification) and their perception of organisational justice?

C- Is any pressure used to select candidates? (Internal and external environment)?

3-What is the nature of the relationship between employees' identity and group membership within power perception in culture and organisation in relation to internal selection processes?

A-Do employees prefer in-group or out-group nominations for the positions?

B-Do they believe that there is a dominant group (elite families-elite officers) that can influence the internal selection procedure?

C-Is there an influence of social power in the internal selection processes?

D-How do power relationships influence employees' perception of justice in internal selection?

4-From employees' perspectives, which type of organisational justice has more influence on internal selection processes?

A-How do employees perceive the three types of the organisational justice?

B-How do the candidates evaluate: tools for internal selection processes, the timeline of the processes, feedback, and information during the processes?

The discussion in this chapter will start with a general view of description of internal selection in the MOE. Then, the main findings of this study will be explored by covering the main themes of the study as well as the themes emerging from the data, which are: centralisation; the existence of clear policies, and procedures, and processes

7.2 General view of the internal selection in the MOE

In this section, I will explore the general remarks about internal selection which gives the reader a clear idea about the reality of internal selection and provides deeper understanding of these processes in relationship to employees' perception of fairness in internal selection. This section is followed by a discussion of the main findings of this study.

The internal selection process has developed since it was established for the first time in 2016. Since 2016, the CV forms have been modified according to feedback from the directorates. Moreover, the members of the central panel have changed, responding to the feedback from directorates about the CV and changing some of the members in the central panel. This reflects the MOE's willingness to develop its internal selection. Another interpretation could agree with Common's suggestions (2008) that public organisations follow senior preferences. The findings of this study show employees believe that the Ministry's is not taking their feedback and suggestions in consideration. Even though all ministries work under Civil Service Law (CSL), which relies on competition to fill the vacancies in supervisory positions, some ministries still fill these positions through nominations by General Directors. This is perhaps due to the fact that each ministry has its own methods of selection.

The seniors in the MOE believed that applying these competitive processes consumed a lot of time and effort; however, the MOE is determined to create equal opportunities for all employees. This reflects seniors' determination to apply standardised and transparent methods of internal selection in the MOE.

Furthermore, in large organisations such as the MOE, different sectors have job requirements which do not fit all candidates in the MOE. For example, in the MOE's different sectors, such as supervision, assessment, training, IT, and HR, the vacancies in these sectors are filled by internal candidates, which means that some candidates are unable to apply for the vacancies. Illustrating this, the Directorate General of Projects and Maintenance, which is responsible for building schools as well as maintaining them, requires candidates who already have experience in such projects. This means that there will be less competition for roles in this sector than in other sectors (like curriculum and supervision) where the vacancies are such that a high proportion of employees meet the job requirements and can apply for those vacancies. This could be due to the nature of the position and the degree to which employees are entitled to apply for these vacancies.

As a result, in sectors which have low demand and a low number of employees, promotion to higher positions will be faster than in sectors where positions are open to applications from every candidate. This explains why competition for supervisory positions differs from one sector to another in the MOE.

Another factor affecting internal selection is that some sectors and directorates face a high demand for these positions, so that selection will therefore be more competitive than in sectors where the demand for these positions is low. The situation is that some low-demand sectors or directorates attract one or at most two candidates, which reflects the lack of willingness to compete for these positions. The high or low demand could be due to the nature of the position or the availability of candidates in the same department or section. Moreover, besides the panels for selecting supervisory positions, there are other panels working to fill lower positions, such as those of specialists and supervisors, in all directorates. This means that the candidate selection is dynamic in the MOE and takes place at different levels for different positions in the central office and the directorates.

Table 7.1 The ten steps followed in internal selection in the MOE issued in the ministerial decree (273/2016)

Step One	Identify the vacancies in the directorates
Step Two	Sending the vacancies and job requirements to get approval from the central office
Step Three	Announcing the vacancies for 15 working days
Step Four	Checking the applications, accepting or rejecting the applications
Step five	Giving points for the CVs according to the guide.
Step Six	Interview the highest six candidates
Step Seven	Send the highest two candidates for the interview in the central office
Step Eight	Checking the applications in the central office
Step Nine	Interview the two candidates for each vacancy
Step Ten	Issuing a ministerial decision of the appointments

Table 7.1 demonstrates the steps followed in the internal selection according to the ministerial decree (273/2016). The table shows that internal selection processes consist of two stages: in the first stage, candidates are screened, then the panels in the directorates interview the highest six candidates and review points collected from their CVs; then in stage two the strongest two candidates are interviewed by the central panel. Both interviews, in the directorates and the central panel, have the same structure and items. The regulation states that if a candidate passes the central interview his or her points will be added to previous points from the CV and interview in the directorate. However, if the candidate fails to pass the central interview, all points will be disregarded. Some participants in the directorates considered the deletion of all points from the CV and the directorate's interview (if he or she got 50% in the central interview) as an act of superior authority and centralisation in the MOE.

This section provides general view of the internal selection in the MOE. The next section will discuss the main findings of this study.

7.3 The triangulation of the main findings of the study

This section shows the triangulation of the main findings of the quantitative and qualitative data of this study.

Table 7.2 the triangulation of the main findings of the study

No.	The item	quantitative	qualitative	triangulation
1	The current procedures of selection	The current procedures are better than previous ones	The procedures have improved but remain inconsistent in some cases; middle staff believe that some of the GDs influence negatively; the junior staff believe that procedures remain inconsistent	Most of the participants believe that the procedures have improved on the old ones; however, some of the middle staff believe that some of the GDs have negative influence while junior staff believe that the main challenge is with the procedures rather than personnel.
2	National Culture	NC has a role in spreading rumours of favouritism.	NC has less influence than the organisational culture. The influences in the generalisation of unconnected events and rumours of favouritism. Also, the influence of failure in selection spreads in society.	NC has less influence than OC. However, it influences the spreading rumours of favouritism and generalisation of events. Moreover, the events of success and failure in internal selection spread easily to the society which in some cases have

				negative influences on employees.
3	Organisational Culture	The OC has huge influence; the selection panels also have influences on employees	OC has more influence than NC on employees. The OC influenced by the lack of clarity of goals, inconsistency, the behaviour of some of the GDs and objectivity with all candidates	OC has more on employees than NC. The influence starts with the clarity of goals of the internal selection, the inconsistency of filling some positions and preferential behaviour of some of the GDs towards some candidates.
4	Power	Relations with the GD have a huge influence, the social relations have less influence.	Power relations have a huge influence, especially with the GDs. Also, those who have information have more power and the power of the groups in employees.	The power of relations is the most obvious type, especially with GDs. Also, the closed group influence power on the members; the employees who have more information have more power than other candidates.
5	Ingroup-outgroup preferences	The three administrative groups, especially the seniors, believed that there is less preference for the group's membership.	The seniors are neutral about in- or out-group for positions, juniors prefer candidates from the same group and middle staff prefer candidates from the in-group,	The seniors believe that group membership does not influence the internal selection, however, middle and junior staff prefer candidates from the same group. Moreover, the selected candidate

			but it depends mainly on how the candidate deals with them.	has to work to gain the favor of the group members. The candidate who is not from the department could face challenges, but it depends on him knowing the group's norms.
6	Self-categorisation	The employees show a moving trend from collective identity to individuality and they believe their perceptions in the first place.	The employees believe that in some cases of closed groups, the norms of these groups define the superiority for old members to nominate for positions.	The identity of employees is creating an individual identity away from the collective identity. However, the group norms and society's rules push the candidates to be dependent on groups' norms and rules.
7	Civil Service Law	Participants from all levels agree that CVL is a hindrance of internal selection.	Different views about CVL. Most believe it creates challenges for Ministries, other participants view CVL as a tool and a reference for these internal selections.	The CVL is a hinder for HR practices, it is rigid to deal with the cases and passive in many cases. Having said that, some believe that CVL is just a tool and reference for internal selection and mistakes are attributed to the ones who apply it.

8	Authorities with independent schemes.	These authorities have a negative influence on employees.	All participants believe the existence of these authorities with higher incentives and higher pensions influence employees negatively.	The existence of multi-HR schemes working for the same government with different incentives makes employees in Ministries feel injustice. In the same vein, the status of the organisation in society has a responsibility to value their membership in their organisation.
9	Distributive Justice.	Lack of knowledge of annual performance, availability of information systems, and equal professional development.	The clarity of all available chances for professional development, especially participating in committees in the Ministry, data for employees' history influence employees' views of these processes negatively.	Employees' perceptions influenced by the clear availability of professional development influence employees' negatively. Moreover, creating a database of employees' history helps the panels to select best candidates.
10	Procedural Justice.	The timeline is crucial in influencing candidates' perceptions, also the Ministry not considering	There is a delay in the timeline, especially the interviews in the central panel. Different views about the CV,	The tools of the internal selection: CV and interviews need to be developed so they can help the panels to select the best candidates for the

		<p>candidates' appeals. The interview and CV give fair chances for all candidates.</p>	<p>panels members believe that CV points do not support panels in selecting the best candidates. Due to time restrictions in the interviews, candidates do not have time to present their knowledge and skills to the panels.</p>	<p>positions. The members of the interview panel should have the training, follow structured interviews and give candidates more time to show their knowledge and skills to the panels. The timeline is crucial in influencing candidates' perceptions about internal selection; it should be controlled by a time frame for each step in the processes and all candidates should work to this time frame.</p>
11	<p>Interactional Justice.</p>	<p>The panels deal with dignity and respect. Inaccurate information negatively influences candidates' perceptions, the feedback during the processes also has a huge influence on</p>	<p>The information is given by request and in some cases, relations play a role in providing it. The feedback is missing through the process, as it two-way communication.</p>	<p>The interactional has two parts: personal and informational. The participants feel that panels, either in the central or directorates, deal with them with dignity and respect. However, the informational is dissatisfied either by information, feedback or communication.</p>

		candidates' perception		This shows that the required steps the central office is taking provide equal information for all participants, who may ask for feedback during or after the processes.
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This section shows the triangulation of the main findings of the quantitative and qualitative data of this study. The next section will discuss the main findings in detail.

7.4 The main findings of the study

Figure 7.1 shows the main findings of the study. The figure shows the findings of the main concepts discussed in this study and the emerging themes from the findings which have influence on employees' perceptions of internal selection in the MOE. **Figure 7.1** shows there are three main streams influenced the employees' perception: the national, the organisation, and social interactions.

The first factor is the national influence on perceptions. This influence stems from four sources: the society's culture, external authorities, and organisational status in the society. The findings of the first stream show that the four themes were discussed in the literature and which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

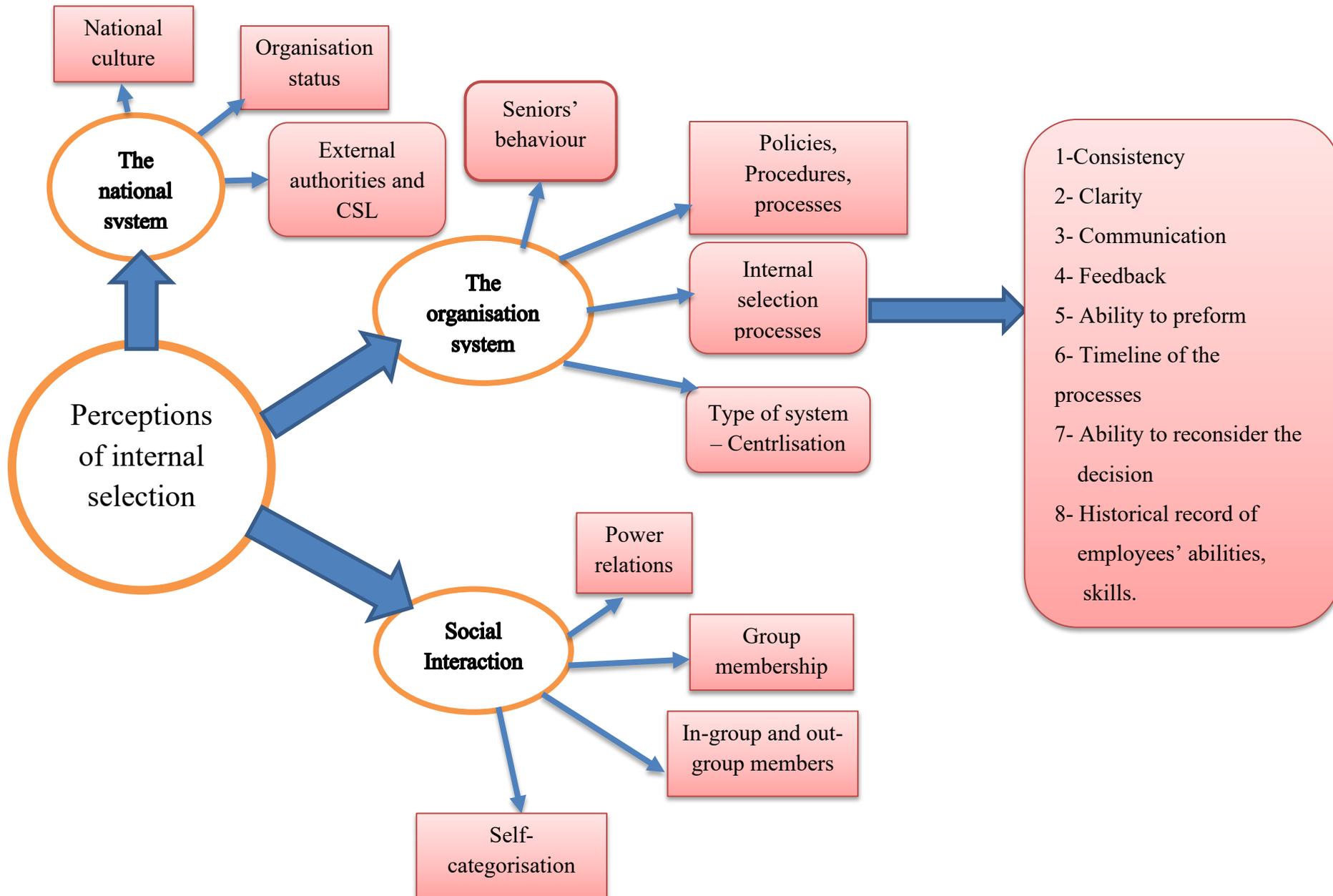
The second factor is about organisation. The findings show there are two new emerging themes under organisation: procedures and processes, and the type of system (centralisation). The other two themes under organisation have been discussed in the literature seniors' behaviour and type of leadership and its effect on employees' perceptions and internal selections processes which were discussed under organisational justice. These processes influence perceptions by the characteristics of the process of internal selection, which include:

consistency in practices and processes, clarity, two-way communication, feedback, ability to perform, timeline of the processes, ability to reconsider decisions, existence of historical records of employees, and the tools used in the process of selection.

The third main factor is about the social system, which includes identity (self-categorisation), group membership, the influence of power in the social structure and how this influences in-group and out-group members, and the priority given to individual and group members for filling vacancies in the MOE. Therefore, this study undoubtedly highlights the mediation between the national, the social interactions, and organisational practices on employees' perceptions of justice in internal selection in the MOE.

Therefore, the discussion in the following chapter will explain each factor in detail to show the relationship between each factor and the perception of employees in the MOE regarding the internal selection in the MOE.

Figure 7.1 The main influences on employees' perceptions



7.4.1 The national system

One of the most important findings of this study is that perceptions are influenced not only by organisational practices or social interactions within them. However, also by the national policies and regulations which also influence employees' perceptions of fairness, especially the factor concerning organisational status in the society. This previous literature has not explored the influence of national policies on employees' perceptions which this section could be a contribution of knowledge on how national policies influence employees' perception in a centralised hierarchical like Oman.

7.4.1.1 National Culture

Ramdhani, Ramdhani, and Ainissyifa (2017) believed that culture exerts an influence on employees' perceptions of the workplace. The findings of this study show that organisational culture in fact plays a more pivotal role than national culture in shaping employees' perceptions. Nevertheless, national culture influences general perceptions, as seen in the spreading of rumours of favouritism in selection processes. These assumptions of favouritism naturally have a negative influence on employees' perceptions, which concurs with Schein (2010) that national culture is responsible for these underlying assumptions. Moreover, this study found that national culture influences employees in general, which can in turn negatively affect employees' perceptions of internal selection in the MOE.

On the other hand, the organisational culture is responsible for two other stages. These stages focus on observable interactions between employees in the first stage, and in the second stage on the attitudes and beliefs of employees towards practices in the MOE. The two stages have a huge impact on daily practices in the interactions between different employees at all levels in the organisation.

Regardless of the culture of collective identity in Oman as described in the literature, the findings of this study show a trend of shifting from collective identity to self-categorisation;

for example, some employees sue the MOE over internal selection. Furthermore, these findings show that national culture influences public organisations in Oman. The stories of failure and success in internal selection spreads outward from the organisation to the society. The researcher asserts that close relationships between society and public organisations pose a challenge to the latter, since the outcome of practices affects the reputation of employees in the society as well. The strong connection between organisations and society agrees with Hofstede's (1991) findings that Arab culture is deeply "masculine", with individuals being judged by their achievement within power structures (so, for instance, one must succeed in positions of higher power to gain recognition from society). That being said, the influence of failure in internal selection goes beyond the organisation and spreads into society, which is stressful and frustrating for some candidates. This could be due to the cultural implications which deem failure in internal selection a sign of failure in the organisation and in the society as well, in some cases extending beyond the governorate to the whole country, according to one of the participants.

The researcher argues that the concept of paternalistic society, as argued by Agwani (1987), influences public organisations in Oman. Public organisations are considered part of society. Therefore, seniors play the paternal role of guiding these organisations and promoting welfare by selecting the candidates who they believe fit into the organisation's culture. As mentioned earlier, playing a paternal rather than professional role challenges relationships between seniors and other employees. The researcher argues that public organisations in developing countries like Oman still function as a mirror of wider societal conditions, and that these organisations' main role is to develop these societies by adopting professional standards that take into account credibility and consistency in all practices. Through adoption of these transparent standards, all procedures will be clear and open for all employees, leading to positive perceptions of practices in the MOE.

In addition, previous literature shows that the political leadership influences public organisations in Oman (Common, 2011) . However, this study shows that the political leadership has less influence, and that of an indirect nature, on the practices in public organisations in Oman. For example, although all the ministries work under the CSL, many ministries follow different procedures for these positions. Indeed, some ministries fill these vacancies by direct nomination from the seniors, which demonstrates that all ministries have full authority, free from the influence of the political leadership. Full authority in organisations' decisions minimises political influence on public organisations in Oman, supporting the earlier-mentioned claim that organisational culture has more influence than national culture on employees' perceptions of justice. This implies that public organisations have full authority in their decisions and the employees' perceptions depend mainly on the practices which take place in these organisations.

In contrast with the findings of Rees and Althakhri (2008) and Al-Ghailani (2005) regarding the positive influence of elite families on decisions of public organisations in Oman, the findings of this study demonstrate that the influence is minimal and negligible as regards both decision-making and the selection of candidates for supervisory positions in the MOE. This could be due to the fact that the earlier studies were carried out before the existence of auditing authorities in Oman. These authorities have reduced interference in these organisations, while the officials, simultaneously, have become more cautious about any influences on the internal selection in the MOE.

While Hofstede shows that Arab culture is low in individualism, the findings of this study reflect a shift towards greater individualism, and the number of cases brought against the MOE regarding internal selection may be considered a good example of that. These cases reflect the trend of moving from the collective identity to the individualist step of claiming reconsideration of the selection decisions. The researcher argues that bringing a case against the MOE, when it is the person's workplace, is not an easy decision to make in a society like

Oman but requires the claimant to overcome his/her commitment to the group, feelings of remorse, and thoughts of the future consequences of suing the MOE.

In addition to the findings of this earlier literature, which indicates that religion has the highest influence on HRM in Oman, this study agrees with Al Jarradi (2011), who found that religion had no direct influence on HR practices in public organisations in Oman. The participants in this study believed that laws and regulations have an important influence on public organisations. The government sets all the laws and policies, which are driven by an international perspective and which agree with Omani society. While it can be said that religion has an influence on general perspectives, it does not have a formal role with the laws governing public organisations in Oman.

This study is unable to demonstrate a link between the protest in 2011 and employees' evaluation of justice in public organisations in Oman. The government initiated different authorities, like State Auditing, to ensure that Ministries followed all regulations and laws concerning the application of justice in public organisations in Oman. This study finds that these governmental efforts since the protest in 2011 have had a positive influence on employees' perceptions of justice in these organisations.

7.4.1.2 Organisation status in the national system

The identities of employees in the MOE, who work under Civil Service Law (CSL), are influenced negatively by employees in the authorities, which have dependence laws. The existence of different HR schemes under the government, offering unequal incentives between the two, creates a sense of unfairness for the employees who work in the Ministries.

The findings of this study would agree with Hogg's interpretation: that employees who work under CSL compare their incentives with those offered to employees who work for independent authorities, leading to negative social identities for employees in the Ministries. Due to unequal incentives for government employees, the Ministries face a huge challenge that

they must resolve, inasmuch as employees often sense unfairness, and no matter how these ministries attempt to create fairness in their terms, the incentives systems frustrate these attempts. Therefore, the findings would disagree with those of Brown, namely that the organisations alone are responsible for the employees' commitment and loyalty. The findings show that the government has also played a role in influencing employees' commitment by creating different HR schemes with variations in promotions and incentives which negatively influence employees' perceptions of distributive justice in these organisations.

The outcome of comparison between employees in the MOE and those in the independent authorities showed a negative effect on their commitment and satisfaction in public organisations in Oman. From that perspective, the researcher argues that the fact of such authorities offering higher privileges than those of employees in the Ministries leads the latter to feel unfulfilled in their desire to progress in the MOE. In addition, such feelings cause these employees, compared to those of independent authorities, to lose their emotional connection to their workplace membership. This leads to a decrease in the employee's desire to maintain his/her identification membership related to working in the MOE. Moreover, this is likely to have a negative impact on employees' satisfaction with, commitment and membership of the MOE.

It is also worth noting that society gives prestigious status to those who work in independent authorities, which leads employees in the Ministries to lose pride in their work. This emotional dissatisfaction leads to a weak public image of the organisation in Oman, further undermining people's trust in its ability to make decisions in general, and the internal selection process in particular. By contrast, when employees have a positive emotional relationship with their organisation, this is reflected in a strong sense of personal identity, trust in decision-making, and an increase in employees' emotional presence in their workplace. Therefore, the unification of all HR laws for organisations and authorities is a necessary step

towards achieving pivotal psychological and job satisfaction, which affects the overall social identity of these organisations.

7.4.1.3 The external authorities and CVL

This section continues discussion of the influences of external authorities and Civil Service Law (CVL) on employees' perception of justice in public organisations in Oman. The findings of this study show that Ministries are facing challenges from existing authorities working for the government, which have independent regulations unlike those of the Ministries. These independent bodies pay extra allowances and have a better pension system, even though they work for the government, creating a challenge for employees in the Ministries. Employees who work under CSL, as in the Ministries, feel that these unequal privileges are discriminatory. This contributes to their judgements of apparent unfairness in the Ministries. The researcher believes that the existence of unequal privileges for employees who work for the government under different schemes is one of the main indirect causes of the perception of unfairness in public organisations in Oman. This sense of unfairness negatively influences the evaluation of internal selection in the MOE. Most participants agreed that the existence of different HR schemes in the government undermines the sense of justice in public organisations in Oman.

The study agreed with previous literature that Civil Service Law (CVL) is a barrier for HR in general and internal selection in particular. One of the complications is that, since applying for a position requires the candidate to have a grade level, some of the employees who deserve promotion have had it delayed by the government. Also, because their promotion was delayed, those employees cannot apply for these vacancies. Accordingly, participants perceived the internal selection as unfair. This constraint by CSL is considered a barrier to selecting the best candidates and an aspect of general unfairness in the internal selection process.

What is more, the previous example proves that the CSL is rigid and ineffective in dealing with daily challenges in public organisations in Oman. The seniors showed that the bureaucracy requires approval from different levels for any change in CSL regardless of how long the change takes. One of the senior participants pointed out that the MOE, which has the largest number of employees in the public sector, requires an updated law to address all the confrontations which takes place daily in the MOE.

This section has explored the findings regarding the first factor, National system, and the three sub themes in this factor. Next section discusses and interpret the findings regarding the organisation system.

7.4.2 The Organisation System

This section starts by presenting one of the main findings of this study. Then, the findings of leadership and internal selection which had discussed in the literature review will be explored. Then, the three new emerging sub themes will be discussed accordingly.

One of the keys finding of this study, contradicts Al-Ghailani's (2005) findings that nepotism and favouritism are perceived to be present in HR practices in public organisations in Oman. However, according to this study, no evidence of favouritism was detected in internal selection in the MOE. There are many possible reasons for this. Firstly, Al-Ghailani's study was conducted in 2005, and since that time the government has initiated auditing departments in each Ministry to audit administrative and financial issues in the Ministries. Secondly, the government initiated the State Audit Institution, which audits all employees' complaints regarding internal selection in the Ministries. the Administrative Court gave employees the opportunity to sue any Ministry over internal selection decisions in these Ministries. The researcher argues that the creation of these authorities minimises any interference in internal selection in the MOE.

7.4.2.1 Leadership in internal selection

The three hierarchical levels of staff (senior, middle, and junior) believed that the internal selection processes have improved in the MOE. Nevertheless, senior staff have more positive perceptions than middle and junior staff. This could be due to the fact that seniors are the ones who decided to make the changes to the internal selection. This reflects the power that seniors have in top-down organisations, besides their role as protectors of these laws in the MOE. The pattern of leadership in the MOE agrees with Common's interpretation, to the effect that paternal leadership influences public organisations in Oman (Common, 2008). This study is the first to investigate the differences between the three administrative levels in public organisations in Oman. These organisations form a centralised system in which the seniors look out for the welfare of the employees and exercise parental leadership, which could justify the findings as to why the senior staff have different views from those of the middle and junior staff in the MOE.

In this context, it is worth considering the difference in views between the middle management and junior staff. The findings show that middle management related their dissatisfaction with the internal selection more than with the General Directors' practices during these processes, whereas the junior staff related their dissatisfaction with the procedures themselves. This means that the middle management is more influenced by the General Directors, perhaps because this group have direct interactions with the General Directors, unlike the junior staff, who only have indirect links with them. However, these findings cannot be extrapolated to all employees, as the quantitative findings show no statistical difference between these groups, and the qualitative findings state that less than forty percent of middle and junior staff showed dissatisfaction with the internal selection processes in the MOE.

The senior staff act as guardians of these organisations, selecting the candidates who fit with the organisational culture, as found by Van Vianen *et al.* (2011) in their study. This can

be a good practice when the seniors put the organisation first, but when the selection is based on private interest it leads to favouritism towards some candidates at the expense of others. The researcher argues that when members of the panels look for candidates who suit their preferences, it poses a challenge to all candidates to be fully aware of these preferences. One senior participant expressed the view that senior members of the panels have in mind specific features of the candidates who can fill these vacancies. Similarly, another senior member clarified that it is a matter of looking for a skilful candidate for these positions.

This interpretation agrees with Common (2011) that making decisions in public organisations in Oman is intuitive, rather than rationale, as it is in western culture. It seems that this also applies to selecting candidates during the interviews. Indeed, one of the senior participants stated that a candidate can be evaluated in the first three minutes of the interview. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that applying these patterns of leadership in public organisations in Oman could maintain the gap between administrative levels in Oman. This indicates the need to move gradually from parental leadership to greater participation in decision-making in public organisations in Oman.

The findings show that the behaviour of some General Directors negatively influences internal selection. The MOE applies new procedures of internal selection which require commitment from the leaders of the MOE. The seniors must be aware of their behaviour in relation to organisational outcomes and particularly the consequences for employees. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), a leader has to be committed to the group's interests. The seniors' interactions in the MOE could be interpreted negatively and influence the employees' identities. From that perspective, the researcher asserts that the consequences of the behaviour of some of the General Directors negatively influence employees' identities in public organisations. That is to say, such behaviour pushes the identities of employees towards

comparing their organisations with other institutions, weakening their loyalty to the organisation.

The participants revealed different forms of General Directors' behaviour during internal selection. For example, a Director General may exercise power to influence members during the interview, withhold positions in coordination with the central panel, fail to invite members to the interview, etc. The General Directors need to be aware of their behaviour and the potential negative outcomes for employees and for the organisation as a whole. Lack of awareness of such behaviour could influence their evaluation of the candidates during the internal selection. The researcher believes that this can be avoided, firstly by awareness of how their behaviour could influence the members of panels, then by taking precautions during the interview, such as conducting a structured interview which would decrease the influence of their seniority during the interviews.

The findings of this study show that elite families practise less interference in selecting candidates for vacancies in the MOE. That said, some participants believed that senior staff occasionally interfere in the internal selection in favour of particular candidates. The senior staff agreed that the MOE cannot be isolated from the culture of the society. However, the role of panel members ensures that each candidate gets all earned points regardless of whether or not there is a recommendation. The seniors' guardian role, as previously explained, exemplifies this.

The next section is about the findings on how the participants validate and perceive the three types of organisational justice in relationship to internal selection in the MOE.

7.4.2.2 Internal selection processes (organisational justice)

This section highlights the findings in internal selection processes in terms of organisational justice. The main finding on organisational justice points out that

interactional justice is the least satisfied type of justice according to the participants. This section will discuss the main findings for each type of organisational justice.

7.4.2.2.1 Distribution justice

The findings show that all candidates have equal access to all vacancies, which are advertised on the MOE's web page. However, while the CSL states that all vacancies should be advertised for all employees in the MOE, the general practice (especially in the governorates) is still to reserve vacancies for employees from the same governorate. Rather than a law, this is an expected norm.

Moreover, the participants believe that the distribution of leadership development is not equal, in that some employees who have a full list of training courses and participation are promoted even though other candidates do not have these opportunities. Generally speaking, training courses in the MOE are offered according to the workplace; that is to say, the participants' perceptions about training courses are not reliable and can be subjective. On the other hand, the researcher believes that there is a lack of participation in committees not only in the governorate but at the MOE level. The researcher argues that involving leaders from all governorates in such committees provides a chance for seniors in the central office to evaluate employees' characters and decision-making skills, rendering the internal selection process for these vacancies more solid and accurate. Thus, providing these opportunities for seniors to directly evaluate candidates' skills would give internal selection decisions more credibility in the MOE.

In the same vein, the findings reveal the participants' dissatisfaction with the lack of information regarding employees' abilities and skills as shown by their working history in the MOE. The selection decision should be built on good information on participants' abilities, especially when the vacancies are filled by candidates from the same organisation. Records such as these would help panels both in the governorate and in the central office to have a clear picture of candidates' characters, abilities, and skills. This would greatly facilitate the panels'

ability to match position requirements with the specific skills of the candidates. The MOE has an advantage in that all the candidates are from the same organisation, making it easier to create data records for Ministry employees.

The employees evaluate distributive justice by the outcomes of the internal selection. The finding shows that all participants favoured their abilities over other candidates, implying that the outcome of the internal selection would determine participants' evaluation of the internal selection. This finding confirms rising towards the self-categorisation whereby self-interest is privileged over group interests and emphasises the trend towards a transition from collective identity to individuality in public organisations in Oman.

It is worthwhile to consider the findings in relationship to distributive justice as between employees who work in the Ministries and those in the independent authorities. The participants of this study who work under Civil Service Law (SVL) are dissatisfied with their outcomes compared to employees working in independent authorities. While all Ministries and independent authorities work for the government, independent authorities have higher allowances and a better pension scheme than the Ministries. As previously discussed, participants consider the distribution of allowances as unjust. The government should unify all HR systems, so that all employees who work for public organisations can reap the same benefits.

7.4.2.2.2 Procedural justice

The findings of this study agree with Gilliland's (1993) model of procedural justice, according to which administrative practices are related to procedural justice in the MOE. Therefore, this section will discuss the main concepts of Gilliland's model: consistency, job relatedness, opportunity to perform, transparency, and the timeline of processes.

Consistency refers to the application of similar rules in all procedures of internal selection in the MOE for all positions for all candidates. Furthermore, organisational justice is

connected with consistency, whereby all procedures are standardised, and all staff are aware of what is expected of them when competing for vacancies in the MOE. Alfes *et al.* (2013) believed that inconsistency in human resource practices in organisations influences the employees negatively with regard to internal selection. Similarly, Chang and Chi (2007) found a relationship between managers' consistency in HR practices and employees' trust in these practices.

The findings of this study show that internal selection in the MOE is inconsistent in its application of procedures for filling vacancies. Indeed, some directorates filled some vacancies directly without undergoing selection procedures. In the eyes of employees, these practices could highlight an inconsistency in applying the rules to all positions, thus generating an overall feeling of unfairness with regard to internal selection in the MOE.

Job relatedness is one of the main concepts in Gilliland's model of procedural justice. In this section, tools (CV and interviews) are discussed in relation to the vacancies (see appendix 8). The participants show that they are satisfied with these two tools used in the internal selection process. Regarding CVs, participants disagree on their value in the internal selection. According to the members of interview panels, some candidates who had brilliant CVs were still not the best candidates for the position. This recommends that CVs are not helping the panels to select the best candidate.

One criticism of the use of CVs is that the candidate can cite any training course even if it is irrelevant to the vacancy. Unfortunately, there are no criteria of relevance in relation to training courses; therefore, candidates get a score because the CV only specifies a training course. The participants who agreed on CVs as a tool believed that they are good indicators of candidates' abilities and skills. On the other hand, some participants, especially the panel members, believed that CVs favour low efficiency candidates over good candidates in the internal selection. Therefore, the CVs ought to be constructed more on the basis of concrete

pieces of evidence such as references, feedback from colleagues, and voluntary activities in the MOE.

As previously discussed, there are two interviews: one in the directorate, and one in the central office(see appendix 8). The directorates have to interview the highest six candidates for each position according to their CV points, which includes points for the qualifications, title of positions and relevant staff development courses. Two candidates are then nominated for the final interview in the central office. These findings show that the interviews in both the directorate and the central office are unstructured. This may not provide an equal assessment of all employees, bearing in mind that each interview lasts no more than 15 minutes. One of the items on evaluating interviews is the ability to demonstrate skills, abilities and knowledge during the interview. The findings show that the typology of the interviews is unstructured, this indicates that candidates do not have equal opportunities to demonstrate their skills, abilities and knowledge for the panels. This means that the short time allowed for the interview and typology of the interviews do not enable participants to demonstrate their knowledge, abilities, and skills to the panels.

In the same vein, another main theme of Gilliland's model is the opportunity to perform. Internal selection chiefly depends on interviews, giving the candidate the ability to display the abilities, skills and knowledge outlined in his/her CV. Regarding CVs, most participants agreed that these cover all aspects of the employee's history in the MOE. The findings show that participants have only 15 minutes for this, so that in many cases they do not have the opportunity to perform their abilities to the panels. Indeed, the participants reveal that most of the interview time is devoted to answering members' questions rather than to giving candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, panels utilise unstructured interviews, which means that not all candidates have the same opportunity to express themselves. Therefore, the limited timeframe of the interviews means that panels

should use structured interviews instead, giving all candidates the same opportunities to present their abilities and knowledge to the panels.

The history of relationships between candidates and directorate panel members could greatly influence the outcome of the interview. Moreover, the findings of this study would agree with Gilliland's (1993) model that the behaviour of a panel member influences participants' perceptions of justice negatively during the internal selection process. Examples of interfering behaviour includes members chatting during the interview, arguing with a candidate over his or her answers, or asking irrelevant questions. In some cases, the members apply excessive pressure, especially on those who did not pass, to reveal what happened in the panel, and some members told the candidates how they were discussed in the panel. This kind of behaviour breaks the pivotal confidentiality of panels. It could also mislead candidates by giving them inaccurate information, while at the same time making it unsafe for panel members to express their evaluations freely.

In addition to the previously mentioned aspects of Gilliland's model, one key element is the opportunity for reconsideration. This refers to the ability to modify the final decision in internal selection. The findings show that participants are uncertain about the possibility of reconsideration of internal selection decisions in the MOE. Inability to reconsider a decision is a common practice which influences employees negatively about the workplace. This reflects a lack of faith in the MOE's ability to mindfully assess its own choices. Thus, this attitude on the part of the MOE could motivate many employees to sue it in order to protect their rights. The MOE, rather than risk appearing "weak" in the staff's eyes, commits to firmly upholding decisions, and preferring to ignore demands to reconsider decisions. This finding shows that seniors are primarily interested in maintaining the image of the MOE, which reinforces the organisation's power over its employees.

Another key thing is the ambiguity of internal selection. Some participants believed that these practices are still ambiguous. The ambiguous nature of internal selection in the MOE

has several causes: not receiving feedback on the final outcome; withholding positions; and absence of discussions with directors in the directorates. This of course negatively influences the internal selection processes in the MOE.

Furthermore, the current internal selection structure lacks processes which would define responsibilities for the members of the panels and for the candidates. For example, some vacancies remain open for more than four years without clear explanations to employees as to why the positions have not been filled. In some such cases, there are even candidates with high points in the CV who passed the interview in the directorate but not in the central panel. The findings of this study show that the relationship between the committees in the directorates and the central panel is not complementary. Rather, it is an exercise of power in which those at the top in the central committee have the authority to assess a candidate's validity regardless of the directorate panels' views and can keep vacancies open for an inordinate amount of time. Therefore, the processes should encourage communication and define the terms on length of time for keeping the positions vacant.

The final aspect of procedural justice here is the timeline of the processes. The findings show that the timeline of internal selection processes ranges from two months to two years, and the findings support Gilliland's, namely that timing is a crucial aspect of internal selection. Moreover, the findings show that selection panels are committed only to the timing of vacancy announcements, which is 15 working days. Otherwise, there are no clear timing dates for the process. The potential outcomes of this long time period and lack of clarity include false interpretations of interference in the internal selection process, as well as a loss of enthusiasm on the part of candidates. Similarly, vacancies in some directorates can take more than four years to fill. This also could lead to misinterpretations of internal selection in the MOE. Thus, the processes should include indications of exact dates for each step of the internal selection, from the vacancy announcement to the issuance of the final decision. Moreover, the duration of the vacancy filling process should be clear and transparent for all employees in the MOE.

7.4.2.2.3 Interactional justice

The findings of this study show that participants ranked interactional justice the least satisfied type of justice in this study. Interactional justice, according to Greenberg (1990), is divided into two types: interpersonal and informational justice.

The participants express their satisfaction with the interpersonal relationships during the selection processes. Indeed, respect and politeness are common values both for the candidates and for the panels. On the other hand, informational justice was ranked the least satisfied type of justice among all participants of the study. Informational justice is about providing the candidates with accurate information, as any incorrect information can lead to negative perceptions of the internal selection. Moreover, during the processes certain information, such as dates for interviews with the central panel, is not available for all candidates, but only for those who have connections in the central office. This situation threatens credibility as it means that not all candidates have equal opportunities to obtain information during the processes. From that perspective, this practice enhances the power of interpersonal relationships, suggesting that those who possess this capital are more powerful and therefore more worthy than other candidates.

In addition to information availability, feedback is an important factor in the perception of justice in internal selection. The findings are consistent with those of Gilliland (1993) and Baker, Perreault, Reid, and Blanchard (2013) that feedback is one of the most important aspects of perceptions of fairness in internal selection. The feedback follows the process, running from the application for the vacancy until the decision is made. The importance of feedback lies in making internal matters more transparent for all candidates, thus eliminating speculation and false information which could lead to negative perceptions of internal selection. Moreover, the feedback has to be informative and timely. The findings show that in some directorates feedback is given only if the candidate requests it, some candidates using their connections to

get the feedback. This means that feedback is not available for all candidates, which further undermines the perceived credibility of internal selection.

The final consideration in assessing interactional justice in Gilliland's model concerns two-way communication. This perspective looks at a candidate's ability to give feedback or offer views on the internal selection. The findings show that candidates' views are not considered in the processes. On the other hand, the panel members indicate that the central panel has agreed to change the CV according to comments from directorates, which implies that two-way communication is present to a greater degree between the panels. Candidates, by contrast, feel that their opinions are not considered by the central panel. Of equal importance, the finding concurred with Al Nabhani (2014) that communication between the central panel and the directorates is a crucial aspect of the success of all projects. Due to the complex structure of the MOE, it would be beneficial to maintain a system of communication which establishes a common basis of understanding and feeling between employees at different hierarchical levels. This communication process should maintain the flow of accurate information and take advantage of new technologies such as email and social media to deliver accurate information directly to Ministry employees.

The first two sections had discussed the findings of the themes which has discussed earlier in the literature review. The next section explains the new themes emerge from the findings of the study.

7.4.2.3 Centralisation of the internal processes

The centralisation and hierarchy in public organisations could create a challenge for internal selection in the MOE. Indeed, Al Wahshi (2015) argues that centralisation could be a challenge for the MOE's human resource practices. Moreover, Al Nabhani (2007) found that the process of decision-making in the MOE was still limited to the central office and that decentralisation of said decision-making was necessary. One feature of centralisation in internal selection is the ability of the central panel alone to withhold vacancies. This practice

of the central panel creates ambiguity, as positions are withheld even from candidates who have passed the interview in the directorates and have scored points on their CVs (see appendix 8).

According to the Ministerial decree, the central committee has the right to withhold a post when the candidate gets below fifty percent in the central interview. The participants of the study believed that isolating the central panel points from other points is a sign of the central panel's superior authority over other panels in the directorates. The researcher agrees that giving the central panel more power than the directorates' panels keeps the employees in the governorates subordinate to the central office rather than partners in decision-making in the MOE.

Yet another example of centralisation is the fact that members of the panels never receive an official report or feedback from the central committee conveying the final results of the nominations. They are simply presented with the selected candidate as identified in a ministerial decree. The members of the panels stated that their roles are limited to the evaluation of a candidate's CV and the interview at the Directorate level (see appendix 8). The Director General is the point of contact after sending the names to the central committee and following them up, and when any job is withheld, the directorates are not informed. However, an oral answer is given when the directorates inquire about them. Lack of clear information here, either for the panel members or directors in the directorates, could influence these processes negatively.

The study agreed that one outcome of the centralised and hierarchical system is that seniors are not initiators, but rather are implementers and protectors of the system. The researcher argues that, instead of following orders from superiors and defending the laws, the MOE, which provides the basis for changing internal selection policies, requires a leadership committed to the new HR policies as well as giving more authorities for the educational governorates in HR in general and internal selection in particular.

7.4.2.4 Existence of policies, practices and processes of internal selection

Noe *et al.* (2017) believed that HR processes, practices, and policies have distinctive features in HRM in any organisation. The policies are the HR guidelines, the practices are the actual implementation of the policies, and the processes are the detailed plan for each step of the practices. Kepes and Delery (2007) argued that processes have a direct influence on employees' behaviour and attitudes about HR in the organisation.

Table 7.3 The existence of policies, practices and processes in HR in the MOE

HR Components	HR in MOE
Policies	The Civil Service Law
Practices	The Ministerial Decree
Processes	No detailed plan of processes

Table 7.2 illustrates the findings of this study that, while internal selection practices in the MOE show the existence of policies and practices, they lack processes. Processes define specific responsibilities of the candidates and the panels, either at the centre or in the directorates. From that perspective, the findings of this study show that the lack of a clear definition of these processes in Ministry HR creates a lack of uniformity in the processes across directorates, leading to dissatisfaction among employees regarding internal selection in the MOE.

Considering the complexity of internal selection and the employees' evaluation of the organisation's integrity during the process, internal selection must be planned effectively while creating a suitable succession plan for these vacancies. The MOE has a complex organisational structure which requires a strategic succession plan for the vacancies, including: an exact number of vacancies in different directorates; a specified timeline for filling these positions; opportunities for training and participation in different committees, either in the directorates or in the central office, to develop employees' abilities and skills; and the chance for senior staff

to evaluate employees' characters, leadership and decision-making skills. The researcher proposes that the past performance of employees can be used as an indicator by internal selection panels in the organisation.

The researcher argues that transparency is highly important in internal selection. Transparency depends on clear and detailed policy, procedures and processes, which are visible to all with regard to internal selection in the MOE. Ideally, all staff must be aware of the goals of the internal selection and the guidelines on the panel members' roles, as well as having detailed descriptions of each step of the process

According to Common (2008), decision-making in public organisations in Oman is intuitive rather than rationale. Moreover, ministerial decisions are influenced by the personal preferences of senior staff, which in many occasions last for a short time and are then changed by another procedure (Al Wahshi, 2015). Therefore, one of the solutions for consistent and clear HR practices is by adopting a strategic approach in filling the vacancies in the MOE, this could minimise the influence of personal preferences in such decisions. Furthermore, a strategic approach is required for complex organisations such as the MOE, which has 12 directorates in the central office and 11 in the governorates. There are altogether 144 departments and 649 sections, according to statistics for 2017/2018. When a vacancy is filled, another vacancy is opened in the same, or another, department, either in the central office or in the governorates. This requires a strategic approach, having a clear overview of the number of vacancies, the time needed to fill them, and the availability of candidates for them.

7.4.3 The social interaction

This section discusses the issues surrounding social interaction and its relationship to influence employees' perception of justice in internal selection. The social has four sub themes, three of the subthemes: group membership, in group and out group members and self-categorisation will be discussed under social identity and the last sub themes is power will be discussed separately.

7.4.3.1 Power

According to Bourdieu's definition of power, the MOE is the field and the directorates and department are the sub-field where interactions take place between different employees at different hierarchical levels. Many studies agree that Omani society is family oriented, and therefore social capital is highly appreciated. Al-Ghailani (2005) found that favouritism occurs in public organisations because of the high valuation of social capital, and all candidates with social capital are thus given priority in the process of filling vacancies.

In 2015, the MOE approved competitive procedures through which the symbolic power of the candidates should not count in selecting the best people for these vacancies. In this respect, this study found that social capital in the form of family connections offers less advantage than network connections. The MOE sets procedures of selection to overcome old practices, which mainly depended on personal opinions about potential candidates. From that perspective, the basic law in Oman states that all citizens are equal regardless of any symbolic power they might possess, economically, socially, or culturally. Previous studies show that symbolic power, especially in regard to the social capital of families and elites, had influenced the internal selection negatively.

However, according to the findings of this study, participants believed that none of this capital, whether social, cultural, or economic, affects preferences in the selection of candidates in the MOE. Nevertheless, some participants believed that the social capital (seniors' relationships) still had an influence in selecting the candidates. The participant agreed that social capital in the form of family ties used to have priority but maintained that now it has less effect in internal selection.

In addition, some candidates know the doxa of selection in supervisory positions, and therefore have an advantage over other candidates. For example, CV-wise, points are given to the candidates who have taken more development courses as well as having higher qualifications. Therefore, many candidates take these courses and acquire these qualifications

specifically in order to have more points on their CV. Moreover, candidates can build a good network with superiors by marketing their skills, while others are less interested in marketing and accuse superiors of selecting candidates who are less effective for these positions. Understanding the doxa of the workplace can therefore be crucial for a candidate's success. The examples of doxa include forming networks either in the MOE or outside it; also using social media (Twitter, LinkedIn) to market one's participation or new ideas on how to improve the workplace in the MOE.

The seniors admit that candidates have different social and cultural capital, even though the role of the panels is to evaluate each candidate equally regardless of his or her capital. Furthermore, the seniors believe that social capital has an influence on recommendations for some candidates (although these recommendations do not prioritise them over other candidates). One of the senior participants explained that the nature of the society implies power over public organisations – as in the USA, for example, where political parties nominate candidates for public vacancies. In the case of Oman, a similar situation exists, but with families instead of political parties. This does not mean that the members of panels should follow these recommendations rather than finding suitable candidates for these vacancies. The spaces in Omani society are interlinked more than in western societies, where all events that take place in public organisations are transferred easily to the society; this makes these organisations cautious about all interactions between employees.

The middle and junior participants believed that social capital plays a role in selecting candidates, while seniors had less belief in the influence of social capital on internal selection. Additionally, some of the junior and middle staff believed that social capital, especially in relationship to the General Director, is linked to successful selection for the vacancies. On the other hand, seniors do not agree that such relationships have a role in the selection process, while some middle and junior staff believed that the tactics used by some of the General Directors influence employees' perceptions of the internal selection. Some of the participants

believed that the Director General was still exercising power on the members' panels as well as the central panel in order to select a specific candidate.

The behaviour of those General Directors can fit Luke's (2004) definition of playing a manipulative role, whereby they follow the laws on one hand, and on the other hand, select specific candidates over other candidates for these positions. These manipulative practices by some General Directors have negatively influenced the perception of justice in internal selection in the MOE. The researcher argues that General Directors in some cases are playing what has been described earlier as the guardian role and, in some cases, pushing candidates who they believe can fill the vacancies efficiently. The transfer period for applying standardised rules requires more commitment from the seniors to enable the change in internal selection to work effectively.

This study argues that, in a way, the organisation influences the habitus of its members and especially the senior staff. The influence of habitus causes the panel members to select the candidates who fit with the organisational culture. The habitus links with Schein's definition (2010) of the third stage of the unconscious, inasmuch as the members unconsciously select the candidates who fit with the organisation. This requires seniors to be aware of the influence of the unconscious on their decisions, then to commit to transparency in decision-making regarding internal selection in the MOE. The section presented the findings on the influence of power relationships on the internal selection. The last section in this chapter will explore the findings related to the social identity with regard to employees' perception of internal selection.

7.4.3.2 Social identity

The findings of this study show that employees have different identities which are influenced by group membership. The findings show that group membership especially the close ones has influence on the members and determine certain norms in these groups. These norms determine the member who has the priority to apply for supervisory positions while other members are not allowed to compete. Acknowledging and understanding the norms

which control these groups would help to understand the type of interactions take place between the member of these groups and how these norms could influence employees' perceptions negatively about internal selection.

On the subject of social identities inside the MOE, the study found that most participants prefer candidates from the same section or department to fill the vacancies, compared with candidates from outside these departments. The participants preferred the ingroup candidates and believed that these vacancies should only be filled by candidates from the same department. This reflects the fact that group membership influences employees' perception of justice in the MOE. What is more, the study found that, in some cases, out-group candidates who succeeded in the internal selection had great difficulty in being accepted by other employees in the section or department. Thus, the success of an out-group candidate depends on his or her personality and leadership skills in gaining support from other employees.

The findings of this study show no statistically significant differences between different groups according to gender, academic qualifications, title of position or place of work. Nevertheless, there is an observable statistical difference in the least experienced group, who have more positive perceptions than those with more work experience in the MOE. This finding supports previous research showing that fresh employees generally have positive attitudes towards their organisations. The participants were divided into three administrative layers (senior, middle, and junior employees), and the findings show that seniors are more positive about internal selection than about external selection.

Additionally, the findings show that the panels, in both the directorate and the central office, are looking for prototypical candidates who have certain typical characteristics to fill the vacancies. The findings agree with Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) that the most prototypical candidate has a better chance of being selected than other candidates. One of the participants pointed out that members of the panel have unconscious biases, so that candidates who fit these are selected. These unconscious judgements present a challenge in internal

selection because they cannot be written down and made transparent. This concurs with Bourdieu's definition of habitus, according to which seniors act unconsciously rather than deliberately in selecting prototypical candidates who fit with the MOE's culture. Therefore, panel members should remain aware of their unconscious judgements of the candidates. This can be related to subjective selection processes; however, it can be avoided by cultivating awareness and following transparent procedures for all candidates.

The findings also show a trend in Omani society to move away from collective identity towards self-categorisation. The cases in the Administrative Court raised against the MOE in regard to internal selection provide an example of this change in the MOE. Nevertheless, the group mentality has a great influence on members' behaviour in the internal selection. Indeed, in some departments and sections where relationships between employees are closed, any vacancy is reserved for the senior employee in the department or section, and only he or she can apply for it. In these cases, any employee intent on applying for the vacancy is considered disloyal to the group norms. These practices are separate from the authority to control interactions between employees according to the norms of the department/section. One of the participants indicated that this impedes good relationships in the sections and departments.

Another key point to note here is that the complex and interlinked relationship between society and organisations has a negative impact on the self-esteem of rejected candidates. This low self-esteem leads some candidates to resign or change their workplace. One participant pointed out that employees in the directorates are the link between the central office and the schools and their feelings of unfairness have a definite effect on their motivation. For example, in many cases, candidates who failed feel that the selection processes are unjust, which causes them to become frustrated and negatively influences the rest of the staff, whether in the directorate or in the schools. The MOE should therefore be aware of the outcomes of selection decisions and how they can be monitored and addressed in MOE.

The section discussed the findings on social interaction with regard to group membership, group identification, and self-categorising with regard to internal selection in the MOE.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the main findings: that internal selection has evolved, but not to the extent that all employees are satisfied with outcomes of the new processes. Moreover, senior staff are more satisfied with internal selection than middle and junior staff. The findings of this study do not support previous literature regarding nepotism and favouritism in internal selection in the MOE. National culture of course has an impact on the organisation. However, this study found organisational culture has a greater influence on participants' perceptions of justice in internal selection in the MOE. The findings show no statistical differences regarding demographics (i.e. gender, work status, or qualifications), but there is a significant statistical difference according to work experience. Indeed, the participants with the least experience are more positive than other groups working in the MOE. Exploring factors such as identity, power, and social identifications provides a deeper understanding of how organisational relationships are constructed and how they influence features such as employees' commitment and satisfaction. The findings regarding the organisational justice within internal selection show that interactional justice is the least satisfied kind compared with distributive and procedural justice in organisations, especially aspects regarding information, communication and feedback.

This chapter has discussed the findings of this study. The next chapter shows the recommendations, limitations, and further studies regarding internal selection in public organisations in Oman.

Chapter Eight Conclusions and Research Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summaries the key findings of the study. The chapter starts with stating the main aims and objectives of the study. Then, the recommendations of the study are presented with three parts: recommendations for the government, the MOE and future studies. There is also a consideration of the limitations of the study, and the chapter ends with the knowledge contribution of this study and reflection on my study.

8.2 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of this study, as was indicated in chapter one, is to investigate internal selection by exploring internal selection as a social interaction and as a process in public organisations in Oman. The employees' perceptions about fairness in the workplace affect employees' commitment, satisfaction, and loyalty to the organisation. Therefore, this study explores employees' perceptions about justice in internal selection for supervisory positions in the MOE, and the main objectives are:

- One** To critically evaluate internal selection in the MOE and how employees in different hierarchical levels perceive the internal selection processes.
- Two** To investigate the most important factors that influence selection processes in public organisations in Oman.
- Three** To evaluate the power dynamics in the organisation in relationship to employee identity and group membership and identification, and how these dynamics relate to the internal selection processes.
- Four** To investigate the candidates' evaluation of organisational justice according to internal selection processes.

8.3 The main findings of the study

The first objective was to evaluate the current internal selection practices and how employees perceive them. The current procedures started in 2015; since that time the members of the central panel have changed twice and the application form (CV: see appendix 8) has been modified according to the governorates' feedback. This indicates the willingness of the MOE to develop the internal selection processes in the MOE. Having said that, the researcher examines the framework of the internal selection and finds some gaps in the framework, some of the gaps related to the macro level (national) and other gaps at the institutional level (micro). The MOE, like other ministries in Oman, works under the Civil Service Law (CSL), which controls all laws and regulations regarding HR schemes in the ministries; therefore, the government and the Ministry have a role in covering the existing gaps in the HR system in Oman.

The findings show that the framework of internal selection is governed only by the CSL and the ministerial decision; however, policies and processes are missing in existing HR schemes in Oman. The national policies play an important role in the government's mechanisms of sustaining fairness and justice in public organisations in Oman and comparing the national policies and procedures in the ministries can act as an indicator of how well justice is being achieved (Noe *et al.*, 2017). The policies also have an important role in setting all steps during the internal selection. This implies that the government has the role of instituting policies because all ministries work under CSL, and at the same time the MOE is responsible for initiating the processes in internal selection in the MOE.

What is more, the findings of the study agreed with previous studies that the most obvious hindrance for the ministries is the Civil Service Law (CSL). CSL is a barrier in HR in general and in internal selection. The current situation of CSL does not support HR practices in the ministries and makes it difficult for all employees to participate in the internal selection. This would negatively influence employees' perceptions of distributive justice in the MOE; the

researcher proposes that the government should revise the articles of CSL and update them with solutions for the ministries.

One of the important findings of this study is that dysfunctional incentives in favour of authorities create a lot of challenges for the ministries. The main challenge is that employees continually perceive unfairness because of unequal incentives, promotions, and pension rewards between the employees who work under CSL and those under the independent authorities. The feeling of unfairness negatively influences employees' commitment and satisfaction. Another outcome of unequal incentives from the social identity perspective is that employees evaluate the status of working in the ministries as less privileged than working for the authorities. This influences their emotional membership of the organisation, which leads to negative identification with their membership of ministries.

The findings of this study suggest that negative identification and the low status of working in the ministries make the employees uncertain of all decisions in general, and of internal selection in particular. The employees become less confident of the decisions of the MOE because of their less privileged status, which influences their perceptions of justice in the MOE. Therefore, the government should unify all HR schemes for public organisations that work for the government, which would enhance positive identification with working in the ministries, leading to an increase in the commitment and satisfaction of employees in the ministries.

Another fact of promotions to supervisory positions in the ministries is that they come without a rise in the salary. What is more, by law the supervisory positions are ranked as administrative positions; this means that if a candidate has any bonus, for example in supervision, he/she will lose it when promoted to management positions. For example, if a headteacher selected for a head of section, he/she would lose the bonus of working in a school. This policy was aiming to encourage teachers and headteachers to attract them remaining working at schools, however, this policy had the unintended negative outcome where many

employees are not attracted for applying for management positions. The reason for not applying for management positions that many employees wary of losing the bonus in their salary and at the same time having greater responsibilities in the new position. This indicates that MOE would lose many highly talented candidates because of the missing bonus in the supervisory positions. One of the negative outcomes of losing the bonus is that the current internal selection does not select the most talented employees for these positions. This is one of the criticisms of CSL: that promotion for the supervisory positions will be higher in administrative rank, but lower in the salary.

In addition, the current internal selection lacks a strategic approach in filling the vacancies, a strategic approach would help to ensure clarity and parity in selection processes, reduce the possibility of interference in the process and thereby prevent negative consequences for the employees. A proposed model of a strategic succession approach would take the form of a long-term plan which the current vacancies and expected ones based on data about new positions, retirements, transfers, promotions and resignations in the MOE. The strategic plan would analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment.

Moreover, it would involve studying the external environment and the opportunities and challenges that come with changing policies and laws from the government. Furthermore, the strategic plan would support the MOE to evaluate and select the best approaches based on changing factors such as demand and supply. The important function of a strategic plan in societies like Oman is defining the roles and responsibilities of all parties in the internal selection and minimizing any interference in the processes as well as maximizing the clarity of the processes for all employees in the MOE. As a short-term outcome, the strategic plan would create a database of the candidates the MOE could hire.

Coupled with the strategic plan are the processes. The findings of this study display a lack of detailed processes in the current practices of internal selection. The processes should contain all steps, with detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of the panels and candidates.

Moreover, the processes should include the ethical procedures for interacting with the candidate during the processes of the internal selection. For example, the processes should state the type of interview (structured) for all candidates and the conduct of the members during the interview. The main purpose of these processes is to eliminate any incorrect practices during the internal selection, which could influence candidates' perceptions negatively.

One of the main concepts informing this study is that of culture. The findings of this study show that the organisational culture has more influence than the national culture on employees' perceptions. This finding proposes that regardless of the influence of the national culture, the organisational culture has a huge impact on employees' perception of justice. More than that, the departments and directorates (workplace) have more influence than the MOE or national culture on employees' perceptions of justice. This recommends that perceptions of employees differ from one directorate and department to another; this reflects the importance of workplace influences on employees' perceptions.

The findings of this study show the trend of moving from collectivism to individualism which indicates that individuals are moving from the tribal system. This indicates that formal organisations play a major role in shifting patterns of thinking from the collective to the individual. This pattern can be seen in the cases against the Ministry regarding decisions of internal selection, and when employees believe their own perceptions. This indicates the possibility of change in members' perceptions, brought about by the tribes' influences. Having said that, the employees are still influenced by the group in matters such as generalisation and spreading rumours. This creates the HR practices complex and challenging enough to satisfy the employees who are influenced negatively by the social culture. This negative influence on employees from the social context in some cases does not reflect the efforts taken by the Ministry. Moreover, this reflects the complexity which public organisations face in a central hierarchical system.

This raises another question: is it the leadership in these departments, or the colleagues, or the group membership that influences employees' perceptions most? The findings of this study indicate that in the sections and departments which have close relationships, the influence of the group will be higher than in other departments. This indicates that group membership influences employees' perceptions of internal selection. Therefore, this finding of the study proposes that the importance of (departments and sections), for example department of planning, department of administrative affairs in improving the employees' perception of justice. This finding indicates also the huge influence of the group on the members' perceptions, having said that, the participants categorising self-categorisation before the group which indicates more influence of individuality compared with the collective identity on employees' perception of justice in public organisations in Oman.

Another key finding is the negative influence of centralisation. The top-down structure, which represents authority and power for the top staff in the MOE, influences the internal selection. This finding agrees with Wiseman's (2009) findings that the centralised system creates implementers rather than initiators or leaders of the system. The current procedures of internal selection reflect the image of the centralised system where the power is in the hands of the ones who are in the top. The researcher asserts that the current situation in the MOE is that directorates are implementers and followers; the negative outcomes of the top-down power structure are the absence of creativity and lack of initiatives to improve the practices in the governorates. The directorates have to be given more authority or at least equal power with the central office regarding the internal selection.

In contrast to earlier other studies findings on the existence of nepotism and favouritism in public organisations in Oman, however, this study did not find any evidence supporting that conclusion. One of the explanations for this apparent reduction in favouritism is that in recent years the government instituted auditing authorities and an Administrative Court to protect employees' rights in public organisations in Oman. This implies that the existence of the

auditing authorities at the macro level and standardised procedures at the micro level would decrease interference in the internal selection.

Equally important is the behaviour of seniors in the MOE. The study shows two main findings regarding seniors: the influence of relationships in internal selection and the behaviour of some of the General Directors during the internal selection. Even though the findings show a decrease in the influence of elite families, the influence of seniors from the MOE still exists in internal selection. One of the interpretations is that seniors play the guardian role and their part in the process is to select candidates who fit with the organisation. Al-Hamadi and Budhwar (2006) believe that rituals, for example socialisation with community and seniors in the MOE, are important in HR in public organisations in Oman; this could be another reason why the seniors prefer some candidates, where those who are well-known through these rituals have more opportunities in internal selection.

The second main finding on leadership is the behaviour of some General Directors who select their own preferred candidates in internal selection. The MOE is going through a period of change in standardizing internal selection procedures, which requires commitment from leaders to the success of the internal selection. The findings of this study recommend that some of the General Directors use manipulative behaviour in selecting their own preferred candidates, this finding would agree with Luke's definitions of one type of power which would influence the credibility of these procedures.

Understanding the group membership, group identifications, self-categorisation, in and out-group members and power is essential in understanding their influence on employees' perceptions in public organisations in Oman. One of the main findings of this study is that there is a gradual shift from collective identity to individuality in Omani society. This indicates that employees are aware of their active role in demanding their rights and participation in making decisions in the MOE.

One of the important findings of this study shows that self-categorisation is increasing in Omani society, which means that employees are gradually less subject to the group's preferences, which leads to a decrease of the influence of social context on employees' perceptions. However, the current situation of top-down and paternal leadership in Omani public organisations would conflict with this trend. Nevertheless, the existence of the Administrative Court, auditing authorities, and the proposed policies of equal opportunities would push the public organisations to create more opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making in these organisations.

The findings show that groups (departments and sectors) influence employees' perception regarding internal selections. The study found that close-relationship groups in some cases control who is permitted to apply for vacancies; for example, the norm in these groups is that all members in these groups let the senior employee to have the priority to apply. This indicates the importance of seniors' awareness of group influence on some employees in internal selection in the MOE. Equally important is the relationship between the group and out-group members; the finding shows that employees' preference is always for in-group members. This implies that any external candidate would face difficulty in dealing with the employees in the section; this requires support from superiors during the early period of taking responsibility in the department or the section.

Another important finding is that identification with the organisation could be influenced by national laws such as the unequal incentives, which would weaken the employees' identifications with their organisations. The low prestige status of the organisation in society would disconnect employees emotionally from identification with their organisation. The outcome of this negative identification is dissatisfaction and distrust of ministry decisions in general and internal selection in particular. This implies in the first place the decision-makers' awareness of the negative outcomes of unbalanced HR schemes between the

governmental organisations, and then the necessity of the movement to unify all HR schemes for these organisations.

Equally important is understanding the influence of power and how different power structures would influence equal opportunities for employees in general and internal selection in particular in public organisations in Oman. Moreover, understanding the power at the macro level (society) and at the micro level (organisations) gives a deep insight into the influence of national culture on equity and justice in public organisations in Oman. The general level of perceived justice in internal selection is moderate in the MOE. The order of the three types of justice shows that interactional justice was the type with which participants were least satisfied, compared with distributive and procedural justice. Regarding distributive justice, the findings show that information on the distribution of leadership development is not available or clear, which leads employees to feel injustice; moreover, there is no performance record of all employees' history of skills and knowledge in the MOE. The absence of such records leads the panels to evaluate the candidates only by interviews; however, the availability of such records would support the panels to select the best candidates for the vacancies.

In terms of procedural justice, the findings show employees' perceptions of justice in internal selection are influenced by consistency and clarity, which are inconsistent in internal selection in the MOE. Moreover, the panels use only two tools to evaluate the candidates: CVs and interviews; other tools such as references, assessments, or psychological tests are not used in these processes. Moreover, the lack of personal records forces the panels to depend only on a fifteen-minute interview. What is more, the findings show that current tools: CVs and interviews are not promoting the best candidates; beside that the interviews demonstrate the power relationship between the central leadership and directorates, the current procedures give superiority of central panel evaluation of candidates abilities and success than the directorates' panels. Therefore, the CV should be accompanied by all perspectives on candidates' performance record, such as character, abilities, and skills. For the interviews, there should be

a detailed document setting down the type of the interview, the behaviour of the members during the interview, the type of questions during the interview, and the confidentiality of the interview. The final two aspects of procedural justice are the weakness of the ability to reconsider the decision and the unclearness of the timeline during the processes.

The final part is about interactional justice. Interactional justice is the type with which the participants of the study are least satisfied. The dissatisfaction is about the availability of information during the processes for all candidates. The information is provided in some cases by members who have a close relationship with the candidate and in other cases if a candidate asks for it. All candidates should be aware of the available sources of information during the internal selection. Another area of dissatisfaction is the feedback before, during and after the internal selection. The finding shows the dissatisfaction is not only from the candidates; the members of panels also show their dissatisfaction with the feedback on the final decisions in these processes. This implies that feedback is crucial for all employees and without the feedback, the internal selection will be unable to improve and meet the standards of equity and justice in the MOE. Baker *et al.*, (2013) argue that employees value feedback from their superiors regardless of the content of the feedback. Therefore, feedback is important to improve the trustworthiness of the internal selection in the MOE.

The last aspect of interactional justice is communication in internal selection. The findings show that the communication is only one way, from the top down, and the voices of the employees are not considered in internal selection. This finding reflects one of the challenges of the top-down and centralised system where voices from the top are more valid than those at the low levels. Therefore, two-way communication is required in the internal selection; this would enhance employees' participation in improving the practices, leading to positive perceptions of practices in general and internal selection in particular.

8.4 Recommendations

This section provides recommendations regarding developing internal selection in the MOE according to the findings of the study.

8.4.1 Recommendations to the Government

1- Instituting policies regarding HR in public organisations by the government. By instituting national policies like equal employment opportunities, the government can supervise these ministries and evaluate their commitments to these policies.

2- Updating all articles in Civil Service Law, which support all legal challenges in daily actions in the ministries. Moreover, make CSL more dynamic in introducing all solutions required to achieve justice for all employees in the MOE.

3- Unifying all HR schemes for all public organisations in the government, which would contribute positively to commitment, satisfaction, and acceptance of the decisions in the ministries.

4-Introducing incentives in the salary, which motivates employees to apply for these supervisory positions.

8.4.2 Recommendations to the MOE

The recommendations for the MOE are categorised under main themes:

1-The Management system in the MOE:

A- Commitment from the leadership during the transition period of applying the new internal procedures in the MOE.

B- Decrease the centralisation in internal selection by giving the directorates at least equal authority to those in the central panel.

C- Equal and transparent leadership opportunities for training and involvement in the committees for all employees in the MOE.

2-The setting of the internal selection

A- Initiating a strategic succession plan for all vacancies in the MOE.

- B- Introducing detailed processes for internal selection in the MOE.
- C- Initiating an information system, which includes the history of employees' character, abilities, and skills, which would enable panels to select the best candidates for the vacancies in the MOE.
- D- The internal selection should be consistent for all vacancies, as well as the transparent, procedures for all employees in the MOE.

3-The processes of internal selection

- A- Revising the CV forms by adding references, which could increase the credibility of CVs in internal selection. The interviews should follow a structured format, which gives fair opportunities for all candidates in the internal selection.
- B- Setting a timeline for every step in the internal selection and giving candidates opportunities to reconsider the internal decisions is crucial for perceived fairness in these procedures.
- C- The information should be available and known for all candidates during the processes.
- D- The feedback and communication are essential to candidates' perception of the internal selection; the panels should provide feedback as well as create a communication system where all the views of employees are considered in the internal selection.
- E- Training the members of the panels of technical skills during the interviews which avoids the ineffective hiring decisions based on poor interviewing skills. The findings suggest that members of the panels have no training courses for the interviews, and the members rely mainly on their experience in evaluating the candidates.
- F- Using technology unfortunately is limited only for advertising the positions in the Ministry's website, using technology could help for giving feedback for candidates after each stage. Moreover, using the technology could be used for submission the application as well as conducting any test which save time and money for the panels either in the directorates or the central panel.

8.4.3 Recommendation for further research

This research has presented an initial overview of employees' perceptions of justice in internal selection in public organisations in Oman. Future research could explore employees' perceptions of leadership development. It would also be of interest to study all public organisations and to compare employees' perceptions of justice in large and small organisations and see if there is any difference between them.

Another interesting area could be a comparison between employees in ministries under CVL and independent authorities and measuring the difference between the two groups in their perception of justice in these organisations. This study is about the influence of leaders on employees, a topic on which studies are rare in Arab culture. Another interesting area could be the influence of centralisation in making decisions in public organisations in Oman. Another suggestion could be a comparison between employees' perceptions of organisational justice in public and private organisations, to evaluate how centralisation and the structure of organisations influence employees' perceptions. The last recommendation for further study by adapting different type of qualitative methodologies such as focus groups and face to face to triangulate and get the group perspective as well.

8.5 Limitations of the study:

The study tried to explore the perceptions of employees regarding internal selection, yet there are limitations, which are inevitable for any research, especially humanities research.

One of the limitations is that even though the study explores the internal selection in Oman, the sample study was limited to employees working in the central office and directorates of the MOE, and it did not include employees from schools or other ministries in Oman. It would be interesting to include all employees either from schools or directorates to find how they perceive the influence of the ingroup and outgroup in internal selection. Moreover, it would be interesting to find out how employees from different ministries perceive justice in their organisations.

Another limitation of this study is that it focuses on internal selection and does not include other aspects of HR like recruitment and leadership development, which could give a more comprehensive view of HR practices in public organisations in Oman.

One study limitation is using an online survey, which may have meant not all employees were motivated to use the new technologies rather than using more familiar formats such as paper web survey s.

Another limitation is using social psychological theories created by western scholars and applying them in Oman. Having said that, these theories are based on explaining the social structure, which is similar in every society no matter where it is.

The final limitation is that the study is about perceptions, and the researcher acknowledges that there might be other factors behind participants' perceptions not discussed in this study. Even though the researcher tried to study their perceptions through the social theories on the influence of identity and group membership, there could be other aspects, such as the type of personality and level of expectancy, which could influence the employees' perceptions.

8.6 Knowledge Contribution

Even though many studies focus on the importance of perceptions of employees at the workplace, studies on perceptions in public organisations in Oman are scarce. Therefore, the contribution of this study consists of emphasising the importance of the perception of employees regarding public organisations in Oman. Moreover, this study shows how national policies influence employees' perception in a centralised hierarchical like Oman. One of the main contributions of this study is understanding the internal selection policies and procedures from a social psychological and organisational justice perspective in public organisations in Oman. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of studying employees' perceptions not only from one side, but in both the social and the organisational context of internal selection

in the MOE. Moreover, this study highlights the actual practices in the public organisations regarding internal selection and names the barriers to improving HR practices in the public organisations in Oman. The theoretical contribution of this study can be seen to develop Gilliland's (1993) model of organisation justice by adding the dimensions of the social context. The social dimensions include the national level, which includes national structure, policies and laws. Moreover, this study contributes to our understanding and awareness in the micro-level of power dynamics which takes place between the diverse administrative levels, as well as the pressures from society's groups exercised on these public organisations. Furthermore, this study adds another dimension to Gilliland's model by reference to the relation between in-group and out-group members and how this influences employees' evaluation of HR practices in public organisations. Combining Gilliland's mode with the social dimensions used by this study gives a holistic approach in studying HR practices in public organisations in Oman. Having said that, the generalisation of this model to other countries, especially the Gulf Arab countries, must be done cautiously, because of the nature of laws and policies controlling HR in these countries. This study provided a holistic approach to exploring HR practices, which are determined by the organisational as well as the political and social aspects of the context of the study.

8.7 Reflection on my study

Before I started the programme, I had had experiences of internal selection affecting myself and other cases in the organisation. At that time the selection mainly depended on nominations by General Directors . However, since 2015, the MOE has started to shift from nominations to competition between employees. This creates a new reality of internal selection in the Ministry.

I had a passion to know more about the perception of internal selection in order to explore its influence on employees' categorisation of themselves, as well as its relation to the

organisation. During the early six months of my study, I started to explore the topic from different perspectives, such as leadership theories; however, I could not find answers to questions about the main components I was interested in exploring: the individual, the group, the processes and the influence of culture (national and organisational) on employees' perceptions. These perceptions can be influenced by relationships inside the organisation with employees at different hierarchical levels, as well as by their understanding of the power influences on these relationships either from the society or the organisation.

Therefore, social psychological theories (social identity and self-categorisation) and their powerful influence on the culture and organisation could explain the main concepts of the individual and the group; in the same sense, the processes can be explored in terms of organisational justice. Social psychological theories identify the relationship between self-categorisation and the group, as well as the influence of employees' relationships with in-group and out-group members and how these relationships influence their perceptions of justice. These theories gave me insight and answered many questions on the influence of identity and how it is affected by the group's members. Moreover, these theories provided me with ideas of how national policies could influence employees' identifications with the MOE; this influence explained why most of the time employees were dissatisfied with working in the MOE. Furthermore, theories of power relationships helped me to understand how the mechanism of power operated in society and particularly in the organisation.

The processes of internal selection are explored through the concept of organisational justice. The investigation starts when the application is sent and continues until the decisions are made. The concept of organisational justice clarifies how each step is important and at the same time is linked to other steps in the organisation. Exploring organisational justice in internal selection gave me insight into how well-planned and clear processes in an organisation could prevent many misinterpretations of and interferences with these processes. I have realised

that the organisation's culture has a huge impact on employees' perceptions of internal selection in particular and HR in general.

During the first two of the four years of my study, I had my family with me, but they had to go back because of my sons' desires to finish school in Oman. During the last year I had to continue studying alone in the UK. The first two years were much easier and more enjoyable, for every day during the first two years of frustration and anxiety while doing research, the moment I stopped and saw them around me all the stress went away. However, the last two years were more difficult as I had to travel and stay away to finish my study, and every time my little daughter asked "Why do you have to leave us? Stay here" it was so difficult. Moreover, during my study, members of my family: (aunt – February 2016; uncle – August 2018; and cousin – March 2019) passed away, but I could not attend their funerals and support the family. This was also a difficult time to pass through, especially with my cousin's death. I was alone, and it was a really hard time to be away.

During the last four years, my passion for my study was at a high level, which really encouraged me to finish the research. I believe that when students have a clear idea about the topic and a clear plan, the support of supervisors can help them to finish the study. At the end of the first year I had the experience of changing my second supervisor, who moved to another university. Moreover, the transition occurred just before my upgrade review, which was a crucial development for me, as I had assumed that supervisors stayed with students until the end of their study. From my point of view, doing a PhD is like constructing a building in the course of which the same group of people work together from the beginning up to the end, and the anxiety surrounding a new supervisor with new ideas could be a challenge for the student. However, I think the personality of the new supervisor reduced a lot of the stress and anxiety I had at the time.

I learned that commitment, patience and good planning will help the researcher to go through the stages of the research. Moreover, my discussions with my supervisors helped me to improve the type of language I used in the research and broaden my rationale thinking when exploring the ideas of the research. Furthermore, in my role as PhD students' representative for two years, I learned a lot about the university's system, besides having the opportunity to support international students at the school which stressed the values of problem-solving, teamwork and positive thinking, in my study in particular and my personality in general.

Going through my study, I learned a lot about myself, my weaknesses and strengths. I was surprised to notice areas of my personality that I had not noticed before and saw myself gradually developing through these years. I learned the value of patience and consistency for achieving my study goals. For example, to obtain each piece of information I had to spend weeks searching for relevant literature and arranging all the literature in a rationale way, so as to convey the study's argument to the reader in an academic and interesting style. I believe the constraints of language face all international students whose first language is not English, the situation varying from country to country. All researchers face constant frustration when the beautiful arguments in their minds cannot easily be transferred into a written, academic style. However, for me, the mastery of language is developing gradually through increased reading not only in academia, but everywhere I can watch, listen, and read English, while constant practice in writing the language improves our abilities daily.

Moving from an administrative position to academia and starting my PhD was a huge step for me in the beginning. I realised that as a novice researcher I would have to read the literature from 8 to 10 hours daily, acquiring deep learning about the research topic, the philosophical assumptions of my research, the research design, and all the literature in my field. I knew this would be difficult and challenging; however, going through this experience has given me the confidence to carry out further research. The atmosphere of the school helped me at the beginning to become more involved in the research by attending the monthly research

forums for all PhD students. In addition, the meetings with my supervisors to reflect on my work gave me the confidence to participate in the meetings, conferences and workshops and to build my network in the school and globally.

The research gave me deeper insight into how to explore my workplace in a more rationale and analytical way, according to the wider perspective which starts from the employee, moves to the small group (section or department) to the large group (Ministry), goes through the organisational culture to the influence of the society, and moves to the national culture. These research skills enabled me to critically evaluate all of these interactions which are regulated by laws and policies and interfere with the employees' perceptions, together with the norms of the groups in the MOE. I apprehended that studying any processes in an organisation required a deep understanding of the main actors who are involved, of the social context and of the laws and policies of these processes.

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Appendix 1: The ethical approval from the School



School of Education and Social Work

School Research Ethics Committee

MS/CM/E2017-14

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23rd November 2017

Dear Saif Ali Saif Al Sheibani

E2017-14

Title: Developing HR practices in governmental organisations: investigating selection processes from the perspective of justice in the Ministry of Education in Oman

I am pleased to confirm that there are no ethical issues with the above application, therefore this has now been formally approved.

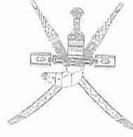
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Simpson'.

Dr Murray Simpson
Convener, ESW Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 2: The Omani Cultural Attaché letter to the MOE

Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman
The Office of the Cultural Attaché



سَفَارَةُ سَلْطَنَةِ عُمَانَ
الملحقية الثقافية - لندن

المحترمة

الفاضلة مديرة مكتب التطوير والدراسات بوزارة التربية والتعليم

تحية طيبة وبعد

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحث

بالإشارة الى الموضوع أعلاه ، تشهد الملحقية الثقافية في المملكة المتحدة بأن الفاضل أسيف بن علي بن سيف الشيباني طالب مبتعث في جامعة دندي بالمملكة المتحدة للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في التربية، وحيث أن مجتمع الدراسة لبحث الطالب سيكون في وزارة التربية والتعليم وعليه يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث ، ولكم منا خالص الشكر

المحلق الثقافي

PP

مسلم بن تمان العمري

18-9-17



Appendix 3: The amendments in the survey items

N	No. of item	The old item	Replaced by
1		N/A	<p>Add definition at the beginning of the survey:</p> <p>The supervisory positions investigated in this study (Director- Assistant Director- Head of Section) according to classifying table of positions which was issued by the Council of Civil Service in 29/10/2010</p>
2	Item number 5 in first table	Rumours of injustice could lead to negative perception of the selection processes.	Rumours of injustice in selection influence employees' evaluation of justice in these processes.
	Item number 9 in first table	In some cases long experience is preferred by the panels regardless of the quality of the candidates.	The panels prefer employees of long experience to fill supervisory positions regardless of their competency as a reward for long service in the ministry.
3	Item number 11 in first table	The culture spreads stories of favouritism whether it is true or not.	The culture has a role in spreading stories of favouritism whether it is true or not.
4	Item number 12 in first table	Some employees believe that the ministry uses the processes of selection as a legal cover to select recommended candidates.	The current procedures of selection are used as a legal cover to select candidates recommended by officers.
5	Item 1 in the second table	All candidates are aware of their rights and the required steps if they feel they need to complain about the decision.	All candidates are aware of their rights in general and in selection processes in particular.

6	Item 2 in the second table	The high demand from a large number of employees for a limited number of promotions could create a feeling of unfairness.	The high demand from a large number of employees could create a feeling of unfairness.
7	Item 4 in the second table	Some candidates have an inflated view of their own potential which affects their judgement of the fairness of selection.	Candidates' inflated view of their own potential could affect their judgement of the fairness of selection.
8	Item 7 in the second table	An employee's position in the Ministry influences his/her perception of justice in selection processes.	Deleted
9	Item 10 in the second table	The employees' family has a link to his/her success in selection processes.	The sons and siblings of known families have more chances of success in the selection processes.
10	Item 11 in the second table	The employee's connections with specific top officials has a relationship to his/her success in selection processes.	The employee's connections have a relationship to his/her success in selection processes.
11	Item 12 in the second table	Assistant directors have the right to fill the directors' vacancies in their departments without advertising them.	Deleted
12	Item 2 in the third table	General directorates have good relationships with some employees which could be an advantage for them to succeed in selection processes.	Employees' good relationships with General Directors could be an advantage for them to succeed in selection processes.
13	Item 3 in the third table	General directors are always looking for best candidates regardless of their families or connections with top officials.	The panels are always looking for best candidates regardless of their families or connections with top officials.
14	Item 4 in the third table	General directors deal impartially with all candidates in selection processes.	Deleted
15	New item added	N/A	Department directors have direct influence on how employees perceive selection processes.

16	Item number 8 in the third table	The recommendations by some top officials for some employees in selection processes go in favor of selecting best candidates rather than personal or family relationships.	Deleted
17	Item 1 in the fourth table	The existence of different bodies which work under government and have different policies of selection could create a sense of unfairness for the employees who work under Civil Service law.	The existence of governmental bodies which have independent policies of selection could influence Civil Service employees' evaluation of justice.
18	Item 3 in the fourth table	The Civil Service law guarantees all the rights to employees to appeal against decisions on selections.	Deleted
19	New item added	N/A	The multi systems and laws between different governmental bodies is unfair.
20	Item 6 in the fourth table	The connections between influential officers and candidate's family have an impact on his/her opportunities for appointment to these positions regardless of their expected efficiency in these positions.	Deleted
21	Item 8 in the fourth table	Misunderstanding of certain verses relating to Quran and Hadith lead some to support relatives in selection processes.	Deleted
22	Question 2 in section three	<p>2- In your view, what are the most influential aspects on selection processes. Order the following items from the most important (1) to least important (4)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employees' competence and skills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interactions with superiors</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Network with top officials</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Kinship with known families</p>	Deleted

Appendix 4 Web survey in English

Participant Information sheet

Developing HR practices in governmental organisations: investigating selection processes from the perspective of justice in the Ministry of Education in Oman

SURVEY WEB SURVEY

This web survey is a part of PhD study which aims to investigate the selection processes in supervisory positions in the MOE. I would like to invite you to participate (voluntarily) in the research, which is investigating selection processes in public organisations in Oman.

The supervisory positions focusing in this study are: (Department director- Assistant director- Head of section) according to classifying table of positions which was issued by the Council of Civil Service in 29/10/2010

The aim of the study:

The aim of this study is to investigate HR practices in selection processes in public organisations in Oman. Moreover, this study will try to investigate how employees perceive the selection processes and how different issues such as identity, in group, out group, and power relationships could influence their perception of justice in selection processes. Your participation in this web survey will be helpful to better understand the selection processes in the Ministry of Education in Oman.

This web survey consists of **four parts**, if you have ever applied for any supervisory position (Head of section- director assistant- director) answer section 1,2,3, and 4 if you have not applied answer section 1,2 and 3 **only**.

Time Commitment

You are invited to complete a web survey which will not take more than 30 minutes.

Termination of participation

Your participation in this web survey is voluntary, and if at any stage if you feel you do not want to complete the web survey you have the rights not to complete it. Also, you have the right to withdraw your data before the researcher starts to analyse it. In case you want to withdraw from the study, there will be no consequences, or plenty will affect you because of that.

Risks

There are no known risks for you in this study.

Confidentiality/ Anonymity:

All data that is collected will be held in a secure office and will remain confidential; the hard copies of all the web surveys will be kept by the researcher, and no one else will have access to your information. The information provided by you will be used for research purposes and may also be used in publication and data will be used anonymously in articles or conference papers. Your name is not requested in this web survey ; therefore your personal identity cannot be revealed.

All the data will be stored in a safety locked cabinet in the researcher's study room at the School of Education and Social Work at University of Dundee and will be kept for ten years, as required by University of Dundee's Code of practice for non-clinical research on human participants.

Research findings:

If you are interested in the findings of this research, I can provide you with them after the study has been completed.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your valuable time and effort in participating in this web survey .

Saif Al Sheibani, PhD student,
School of Education and Social Work
University of Dundee
Email:salsheibani@dundee.co.uk

Section 1: Demographic information

Please indicate your responses by ticking () in the appropriate box.

1 Gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Work experience	0-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15-20	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Academic Qualification	PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Master	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bachelor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Position	Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Director General	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Assistant Director General	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Expert	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Department director	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Assistant director	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Head of Section	<input type="checkbox"/>

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	The MOE works hard to create fair opportunities for all employees.							
2	The selection processes are based on fairness and standard criteria.							
3	The existence of selection processes develops a sense of justice among employees							
4	The organisational culture has an influence in determining justice in selection processes in these organisations.							
5	Selecting the best and efficient candidates for supervisory positions is the main goal of selecting panels either in the directorate or the central office.							
6	The panels in the directorates or the central office have great influence on how employees perceive selection processes.							
7	The current process of selection is better than the old one which was mainly dependent on nominations from general directors.							
8	The panels prefer employees of long experience to fill supervisory position regardless their competency as a reward for their long service in the MOE.							
9	The priority for selection in supervisory positions is for the candidates who are							

	from same section-department regardless of the competency of candidates from other departments.							
10	Rumours of injustice in selection influence employees' evaluation of justice in these processes.							
11	The culture has a role of spreading stories of favouritism whether it is true or not.							
12	The current procedures of selection are used as a legal cover to select recommended candidates by officers.							

Employees:

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	All employees are aware of their rights in all general issues and particularly in selection processes.							
2	The high demand from many employees could create a feeling of unfairness.							
3	Some candidates tend to justify their lack of success by claiming favouritism in these processes.							
4	Candidates' inflated view of their own potential could affect their judgment of the fairness of selection.							
5	The employees prefer to fill the vacancies by candidates from same							

	section, department or directorate.							
6	Both male and female applicants have the same opportunities in the selection process.							
7	The existence of many candidates is a challenge for panels in the directorate.							
8	Negative feelings from previous failed experiences in selection could affect candidates' judgment of selection processes.							
9	The sons and siblings of known families have more chances of success in the selection processes.							
10	The employees' connections have a relationship of his/her success in selection processes.							
11	Some employees do not apply for positions because they perceive processes as unfair.							

The Top Officers

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	The panels are always looking for best candidates regardless of their families or connections with top officials.							
2	Department directors influence employees' chances of success in selection processes.							
3	Department directors have direct influence of how							

	employees perceive selection processes.							
4	Employees' good relationships with General Directors could be an advantage for them to succeed in selection processes.							
5	General directors have direct influence of how employees perceive selection processes.							
6	General directors face huge pressures from elite families and top officials to select some candidates.							
7	The top officials' recommendations for some staff are necessary to balance between the legal requirements and selecting best candidates for these positions.							
8	Any recommendation for any employee during the selection processes is unfair.							

The External Forces

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	The existence of governmental bodies which have independent policies of selection could influence employees of Civil Service evaluation of justice.							
2	The protest events in 2011 influence employees' perception of justice in the MOE.							

3	The multi systems and laws between different governmental bodies is unfair.							
4	The civil Service law creates a lot of challenges for the MOE in selecting best candidates for supervisory positions.							
5	The successful cases against the MOE are evidence of the guarantee of employees' rights in public organisations.							
6	Interference from elite families and top officials influence the credibility of selection in the MOE.							

Section Three:

In your view, who is responsible for candidates' perceptions of selection processes. Order following items from most important (1) to least important (4):

N	Items	1	2	3	4
	Candidates themselves				
	The place of work(section-department)				
	The culture of the MOE				
	The national culture				

Section Four: This section is only for candidates who have applied for supervisory positions (head section-director assistant- director). Please read each of the items below and tick the box that best reflects your opinion to each statement.

(SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree)

N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD
1	Employees are evaluated against standard criteria without personal interferences from superiors.							
2	The norms of (academic qualification, work experience, positions, training courses, performance appraisal and interviews) give fair chances for all candidates.							
3	The marks for (academic qualification, work experience, positions, training courses, performance appraisal and interviews) give fair chances for all candidates							
4	Lack of knowledge of score of the performance appraisal which counted in the CV could lead to employee's feelings of injustice.							
5	There is a clear process for all employees to appeal against selection decisions.							
6	The MOE draws back any selection decision if any candidates appeal against it before they go the court.							
7	The interview panel in the directorate or the central							

	office is fair for all candidates.							
8	There is a clear timeline for the processes of selection.							
9	Any delay in the processes of selection could lead employees to feel unfairness.							
10	The interview panel in the directorate or the central office deals with all candidates with respect and dignity.							
11	Employees get fair training programmes which give them fair chances in the selection processes.							
12	The higher management in the MOE plan efficiently to select best candidates in supervisory positions.							
13	Transparency and clarity are the main core elements for selection processes in the MOE.							
14	Candidates' chances are affected by their relationships to superiors.							
15	Candidates' opinions about selection are considered from the top management in the MOE.							
16	Candidates are asked to give their feedback about the selection processes.							
17	Candidates' suggestions are taken into consideration in developing selection processes in the MOE.							
18	There is a system of information and history for all employees which							

	help the MOE to select the best candidates.							
19	All candidates get feedback for all their inquiries during selection processes.							
20	All candidates get feedback for the final result of their application in supervisory position.							
21	The vacancies in the directorates and the central office are advertised and all employees get access to it.							
22	Candidates are appreciated and respected for their efforts in the MOE.							
23	Candidates' complaints are handled objectively by a neutral committee in the MOE.							
24	Superiors sympathize with candidates' rights of appealing against selection decisions.							
25	Any false information during the process could influence the candidates negatively.							
26	Any unintended mistake during the selection could influence candidates' perception of justice.							
27	The interviews give the candidates the space to show their knowledge and competences about the position.							
28	The interviews focus on technical side of the position rather than how to run and develop it							

29	In the selection of supervisory position there is mutual trust between candidates and panels either in the governorates or the central office.							
----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

End of Web survey , thank you for your valuable participation

Appendix 5 Web survey in Arabic

استمارة معلومات عامة عن الاستبانة

تطوير ممارسات الموارد البشرية في المنظمات الحكومية: البحث في إجراءات الاختيار للوظائف الإشرافية من خلال منظور العدالة في وزارة التربية والتعليم في عمان

الإستبانة:

هذه الإستبانة هي جزء من دراسة الدكتوراه التي تهدف إلى البحث في إجراءات الاختيار في الوظائف الإشرافية في وزارة التربية. أود أن أدعوكم للمشاركة (كمتموع/كمتطوعة) في البحث، الذي يبحث في إجراءات الاختيار في المنظمات الحكومية في عمان.

الوظائف الإشرافية التي تعنى بها الدراسة (مدير دائرة- مدير مساعد- رئيس قسم) بناء على نظام تصنيف الوظائف الصادر بقرار من مجلس الخدمة المدنية بتاريخ 29\10\2010م.

الهدف من الدراسة:

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو البحث في ممارسات الموارد البشرية في إجراءات الاختيار في المنظمات الحكومية في عمان. وستكون مشاركتكم في هذا الإستبيان لتوضيح لإجراءات الاختيار في وزارة التربية والتعليم في عمان.

يتكون هذا الإستبيان من أربعة أجزاء، إذا سبق لك الترشح لأحد الوظائف الإشرافية (رئيس قسم- مدير- مدير مساعد) فعليك أن تقوم بالإجابة على الأربعة أجزاء، أما إذا لم تترشح فعليك أن تجيب فقط على الجزء الاول والثاني والثالث فقط.

الوقت اللازم لإنهاء الإستبانة:

استكمال الإستبيان الذي يستغرق أكثر من 30 دقيقة.

المشاركة في الإستبانة:

إن مشاركتك في هذه الاستبانة إختيارية، وإذا كنت تشعر بأنك لا ترغب في إكمال الإستبيان في أي مرحلة من المراحل، فإنك تملك الحق في عدم إكماله.

السرية / عدم الكشف عن الهوية:

جميع البيانات التي يتم جمعها ستحفظ في مكتب آمن وسوف تبقى سرية؛ وسوف تستخدم المعلومات التي تقدمها لغرض البحث ويمكن أيضا أن تستخدم في النشر في المقالات أو أوراق المؤتمرات. اسمك غير مطلوب في هذا الإستبيان. وبالتالي لا يمكن الكشف عن هويتك الشخصية.

نتائج البحث:

إذا كنت مهتما بنتائج هذا البحث، يمكنني تقديم نسخة منه بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو تتطلب المزيد من المعلومات التكرم بالتواصل على البريد الإلكتروني للباحث.

أشرك على وقتك الثمين وجهدك في المشاركة في هذه الإستبانة.

سيف الشيباني، طالب دكتوراة،

كلية التربية والعمل الاجتماعي

جامعة دندي، المملكة المتحدة

البريد الإلكتروني: salsheibani@dundee.co.uk

الجزء الأول: معلومات وبيانات عامة

يرجى التكرم بالإشارة بعلامة (√) على الإختيار المناسب:

1- الجنس ذكر

أنثى

2- الخبرة الإجراءات 0-4

5-14

15-20

م	الفقرات				
13	الموظفين لديهم معرفة بحقوقهم بشكل عام وفي إجراءات الاختيار في الوظائف الاشرافية بشكل خاص.				
14	الرغبة العالية لكثير من الموظفين بشغل الوظائف الاشرافية قد تؤدي الى شعور بعدم الإنصاف في إجراءات الاختيار.				
15	بعض المرشحين قد يعلنون عدم نجاحهم في الترشح لهذه الوظائف بالمحسوبية في الاختيار.				
16	التقدير الذاتي المرتفع لبعض المرشحين لكفاءاتهم وخبرتهم تؤثر على حكمهم بعدالة الاختيار.				
17	الموظفين يفضلوا بسد الشواغر بمرشحين من نفس الاقسام، الدوائر أو المديريات.				
18	الذكور والاثاث لديهم نفس الفرص في شغل هذه الوظائف.				
19	وجود أعداد كبيرة من المترشحين يعتبر تحدي كبير لأعضاء اللجان في المديريات.				
20	الخبرات السلبية الناتجة عن عدم النجاح في الترشح في مرات سابقة يؤثر على حكم الموظفين بعدالة الاختيار.				
21	ابناء وأقارب بعض العائلات المعروفة لديهم فرص النجاح أكثر في إجراءات الاختيار للوظائف الاشرافية.				
22	العلاقات لها دور في فرص نجاح الموظف في إجراءات الاختيار على الوظائف الاشرافية.				
23	بعض الموظفين لا يترشحون لهذه الوظائف لاعتقادهم بعدم مصداقية إجراءات الترشح.				

					تقييم موظفي الخدمة المدنية للعدالة في المؤسسات التي يعلمون بها.
				33	أحداث الاعتصامات في 2011 قد أثرت على اعتقاد الموظفين بمستوى العدالة في المؤسسات الحكومية.
				34	تعدد القوانين والتشريعات بين وحدات الجهاز الإداري التابع للخدمة المدنية وبعض الهيئات يعتبر غير عادل.
				35	خضوع وزارة التربية والتعليم لقانون الخدمة المدنية يضعها أمام الكثير من التحديات لأختيار أفضل المرشحين للوظائف الإشرافية.
				36	القضايا الناجحة ضد القرارات الوزارية تعتبر حالة صحية كدليل أن حقوق الموظفين مكفولة في الدولة.
				37	تدخل المسؤولين والعائلات يؤثر على مصداقية الترشح في الوظائف الإشرافية.

القسم الثالث:

1- من وجهة نظرك من هو المسؤول في تشكيل وجهات نظر الموظفين عن إجراءات الإختيار. رتب العناصر الآتية من حيث أهميتها من الأكثر أهمية (1) الى الأقل أهمية (4):

أ- الموظفون أنفسهم

ب- الدوائر والمديريات

ج- الوزارة

د- المجتمع الخارجي

رابعاً: هذه الجزئية فقط لأي موظف قام بالترشح للوظائف الإشرافية فقط

التكرم بقراءة العبارات الآتية وأختر ما يمثل رأيك في كل عبارة من العبارات باستخدام المقياس الخماسي التالي:

					الإدارة العليا في الوزارة تخطط بشكل سليم لاختيار أفضل المترشحين في الوظائف الإشرافية.	12
					الوضوح والشفافية أهم العناصر في إجراءات الإختيار للوظائف الإشرافية.	13
					فرص المترشح تتأثر بعلاقته برؤسائه.	14
					أراء المترشحين لإجراءات الإختيار يتم الاهتمام بها من قبل الإدارة العليا.	15
					يطلب من الموظفين إعطاء تغذية راجعة لإجراءات الإختيار في الوظائف الإشرافية.	16
					اقتراحات الموظفين تأخذ في الحسبان لتطوير إجراءات الإختيار في الوظائف الإشرافية.	17
					هناك نظام معلومات في الوزارة لتاريخ وكفاءة الموظفين تساعد على اختيار أفضل المترشحين للوظائف الإشرافية.	18
					يحصل المترشحين على ردود لكل استفساراتهم أثناء إجراءات الإختيار.	19
					يحصل كل المترشحين على تغذية راجعة لنتيجة النهائية لطلبهم في الترشيح على الوظائف الإشرافية.	20
					جميع الشواغر في المديريات والوزارة يتم الاعلان عنها في موقع الوزارة ويمكن لجميع الموظفين الاطلاع عليها.	21
					المترشحين لهم كل الاحترام والتقدير على جهودهم في عملهم.	22
					التعامل بموضوعية مع شكاوى المترشحين من قبل لجنة محايدة في الوزارة.	23
					المسؤولين متعاطفين مع قراري بالشكوى ضد قرار الإختيار في الوظائف الإشرافية.	24

					المعلومات الخاطئة التي قد يحصلون عليها المرشحين تأثر على تقييمهم للعدالة في إجراءات الإختيار.	25
					الاطء غير المتعمدة أثناء إجراءات الإختيار تؤثر على المرشحين لتقييمهم مستوى العدالة في إجراءات الإختيار.	26
					المقابلات تتيح للمرشحين استعراض كفاءتهم وإمامهم بمهام الوظيفة المتنافس عليها.	27
					تركز المقابلات على الجانب الفني للوظيفة أكثر من كيفية إدارة العمل والنظرة المستقبلية له.	28
					تتسم إجراءات الإختيار للوظائف الإشرافية بالثقة بين الموظفين ولجان الإختيار في المديريات والوزارة.	29

شكرا جزيلا للوقت والجهد للمشاركة في الإستبانة

Appendix 6 Interview in English

CONSENT FORM

Developing HR practices in governmental organisations: investigating selection processes from the perspective of justice in the Ministry of Education in Oman

This interview is a part of PhD study which aims to investigate the selection processes in supervisory positions in the MOE. This study will try to investigate how employees perceive the selection processes and how different issues such as identity, in group, out group, and power relationships could influence their perception of justice in selection processes. I would like to invite you to participate (voluntarily) in the research, which is investigating selection processes in Ministry of Education in Oman.

By signing below you are indicating that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and that you agree to take part in this research study.

Signature of participant

Date

Name of participant

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Name of person obtaining consent

I agree to the use of anonymous extracts from my interview in conference papers and academic publications

YES NO

I agree to the audio recording of the interview

YES NO

Participant Information sheet

Developing HR practices in governmental organisations: investigating selection processes from the perspective of justice in the Ministry of Education in Oman

Interview questions

This interview is a part of PhD study which aims to investigate the selection processes in supervisory positions in the MOE. I would like to invite you to participate (voluntarily) in the research, which is investigating selection processes in public organisations in Oman.

The aim of the study:

The aim of this study is to investigate HR practices in selection processes in public organisations in Oman. Moreover, this study will try to investigate how employees perceive the selection processes and how different issues such as identity, in group, out group, and power relationships could influence their perception of justice in selection processes. Your participation in this web survey will be helpful to better understand the selection processes in the Ministry of Education in Oman.

Time Commitment

You are invited to complete a web survey which will not take more than 60 minutes.

Termination of participation

Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and if at any stage if you feel you do not want to complete the interview you have the rights not to complete it. Also, you have the right to withdraw your data before the researcher starts to analyse it. In case you want to withdraw from the study, there will be no consequences, or plenty will affect you because of that.

Risks

There are no known risks for you in this study.

Confidentiality/ Anonymity:

All data that is collected will be held in a secure office and will remain confidential; the hard copies of all the interviews will be kept by the researcher, and no one else will have access to your information. The information provided by you will be used for research purposes and may also be used in publication and data will be used anonymously in articles or conference papers. Your name is not requested in this interview, therefore your personal identity cannot be revealed.

All the data will be stored in a safety locked cabinet in the researcher's study room at the School of Education and Social Work at University of Dundee and will be kept for ten years, as required by University of Dundee's Code of practice for non-clinical research on human participants.

Research findings:

If you are interested in the findings of this research, I can provide you with them after the study has been completed.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your valuable time and effort in participating in this interview.

**Saif Al Sheibani, PhD student,
School of Education and Social Work
University of Dundee
Email: salsheibani@dundee.co.uk**

Section One:

- 1- Date of interview:
- 2- Title of position:
- 3- Place of work:
- 4-No. of the interview:

Section Two:

- 1-How do you evaluate selection processes in the MOE?
- 2- Do all employees regardless (gender, work experience, family position, network relationships, academic qualification) have the same opportunities in selection processes?
- 3-Do the current procedures select the best candidates for these positions?
- 4- How do you see the MOE culture (In this study the culture refers to shared norms, values and beliefs as well as way of working which reflects by behaviors of employees)? Could this culture be a challenge for the selection processes?
- 3- How does national culture influence employees' perception of possibility of favouritism in selection processes?
- 4-What about the numbers of candidates, do these positions attract many employees to apply or not? Why?
- 5-Does Civil Service Law affect selection processes (positive-negative)?
- 6-Does the number of institutions which work under the government and have different schemes make a challenge to employees' perception of justice in selection processes?
- 7-Do you think that religion may have impact in the selection processes?
- 8- What is the influence, if any, of social group (hierarchal power families) in shaping employee's identity? How does it relate to his perception of justice?

- 9- Do employees differentiate between internal candidates and external candidates? Why?
- 10-How do they perceive the external candidates from outside department?
- 11- Do employees' perception of justice or injustice in selection processes affect their applications for supervisory positions?
- 12- How do you evaluate power influence in the MOE? To what extent could influence selection decision in the MOE?
- 13-Do you think that power relationships could influence selection decision?
- 14- To what extent could employees' perception of power influence their judgment in the selection processes?
- 15-How could social power (elite families and top officers) be related to selection processes in the MOE?
- 16- What's your evaluation of overall fairness in selection processes in the MOE?
- A- What's your evaluation of fairness during the processes of selection?
 - B- What's your evaluation of equity before and after hiring decisions?
 - C- What's your evaluation of fairness in personal and informational treatments for all candidates during the processes of selection?

Appendix 7 Interview in Arabic

نموذج الموافقة على المقابلة

تطوير ممارسات الموارد البشرية في المنظمات الحكومية: البحث في عمليات الاختيار للوظائف الإشرافية من خلال منظور العدالة في وزارة التربية والتعليم في عمان

هذه المقابلة هي جزء من دراسة الدكتوراه التي تهدف إلى التحقيق في عمليات الاختيار في المناصب الإشرافية في وزارة التربية. يسرني دعوتكم للمشاركة (كمتطوع\كمتطوعة) في البحث، الذي يهتم في عملية الاختيار في وزارة التربية والتعليم في سلطنة عمان.

بالتوقيع أدناه، فإنك تشير إلى أنك قرأت وفهمت ورقة معلومات المشاركة، وأنت توافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

توقيع المشارك\المشاركة:

اسم المشارك\المشاركة

توقيع الباحث:

اسم الباحث:

1-أوافق على استخدام الباحث مقتطفات من مقابلتي بحيث لا تحتوي على اسمي نعم لا

في أوراق المؤتمرات والأبحاث الأكاديمية

2-أوافق على التسجيل الصوتي للمقابلة: نعم لا

معلومات عن المقابلة

تطوير ممارسات الموارد البشرية في المنظمات الحكومية: البحث في عمليات الاختيار للوظائف الإشرافية من خلال منظور العدالة في وزارة التربية والتعليم في عمان

المقابلة:

هذه المقابلة هي جزء من دراسة الدكتوراه التي تهدف إلى البحث في عمليات الاختيار في الوظائف الإشرافية في وزارة التربية. أود أن أدعوكم للمشاركة (كمتطوع/كمتطوعة) في البحث، الذي يبحث في عمليات الاختيار في المنظمات الحكومية في عمان.

الوظائف الإشرافية التي تعنى بها الدراسة (مدير دائرة- مدير مساعد- رئيس قسم) بناء على نظام تصنيف الوظائف الصادر بقرار من مجلس الخدمة المدنية بتاريخ 2010\10\29م.

الهدف من الدراسة:

والهدف من هذه الدراسة هو البحث في ممارسات الموارد البشرية في عمليات الاختيار في المنظمات الحكومية في سلطنة عمان. وستكون مشاركتكم في هذه المقابلة لتوضيح عمليات الاختيار في وزارة التربية والتعليم في سلطنة عمان.

الوقت اللازم لإنهاء المقابلة:

المقابلة لن تستغرق أكثر من 60 دقيقة.

المشاركة في المقابلة:

مشاركتك في هذا المقابلة اختيارية، وإذا كنت تشعر بأنك لا ترغب في إكمال المقابلة في أي مرحلة من المراحل، فإنك تملك الحق في عدم إكمالها. بعد الانتهاء من المقابلة فإن لك الحق في المطالبة بعدم إدخال مقابلتك ضمن بيانات البحث.

السرية / عدم الكشف عن الهوية:

جميع البيانات التي يتم جمعها ستحفظ في مكتب آمن وسوف تبقى سرية؛ وسوف تستخدم المعلومات التي تقدمها لأغراض البحث ويمكن أيضا أن تستخدم في النشر في المقالات أو أوراق المؤتمرات. اسمك غير مطلوب في هذا المقابلة ماعدا في موافقتك على المقابلة. وبالتالي لا يمكن الكشف عن هويتك الشخصية.

نتائج البحث:

إذا كنت مهتما في نتائج هذا البحث، يمكنني تقديم نسخة من نتائج البحث بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة.

إذا كانت لديك أي أسئلة أو تتطلب المزيد من المعلومات التكرم بالتواصل على البريد الإلكتروني للباحث.
أشكرك على وقتك الثمين وجهدك في المشاركة في هذه الاستبانة.

سيف الشيباني، طالب دكتوراه،
كلية التربية والعمل الاجتماعي
جامعة دندي، المملكة المتحدة

البريد الإلكتروني: salsheibani@dundee.co.uk

القسم الأول:

- 1- تاريخ المقابلة:
- 2- عنوان الوظيفة:
- 3- مكان العمل:
- 4- رقم المقابلة:

القسم الثاني:

- 1- كيف تقيم عمليات الاختيار في الوزارة؟
- 2- هل يتمتع جميع الموظفين بغض النظر عن (الجنس، والخبرة العملية، والوضع العائلي، والعلاقات الشبكية، والمؤهل العلمي) بنفس الفرص في عمليات الاختيار؟
- 3- هل تختار الإجراءات الحالية أفضل المرشحين لهذه المناصب؟
- 4- كيف ترى ثقافة الوزارة (في هذه الدراسة تشير الثقافة إلى المعايير والقيم والمعتقدات المشتركة وكذلك طريقة العمل التي تعكس سلوكيات الموظفين)؟ هل يمكن لهذه الثقافة أن تشكل تحدياً لعمليات الاختيار؟
- 3- كيف تؤثر الثقافة الوطنية على تصور الموظفين لإمكانية المحسوبية في عمليات الاختيار؟
- 4- ماذا عن أعداد المرشحين، هل تجذب هذه الوظائف العديد من الموظفين للمنافسة أم لا؟ لماذا؟
- 5- هل يؤثر قانون الخدمة المدنية على عمليات الاختيار (سلبياً / إيجابياً)؟

- 6 - هل يشكل عدد المؤسسات التي تعمل في إطار الحكومة ولديها أنظمة مختلفة تحدياً لتصور الموظفين للعدالة في عمليات الاختيار؟
- 7- هل تعتقد أن الدين قد يكون له تأثيراً في عمليات الاختيار؟
- 8- ما هو التأثير، إن وجد، للفئة الاجتماعية (أسر النخبة) في تشكيل هوية الموظف؟ كيف يرتبط ذلك بإدراكه للعدالة؟
- 9- هل يفرق الموظفون بين المرشحين الداخليين والمرشحين الخارجيين؟ لماذا؟
- 10 - كيف ينظرون إلى المرشحين من خارج القسم الدائرة، المديرية؟
- 11- هل يؤثر تصور الموظفين لعدم الانصاف في عمليات الاختيار على طلباتهم لترشح لهذه الوظائف الإشرافية؟
- 12- كيف تقيم تأثير السلطة في الوزارة؟ إلى أي مدى يمكن أن تؤثر على قرار الاختيار في الوزارة؟
- 13 - هل تعتقد أن علاقات السلطة يمكن أن تؤثر على قرار الاختيار؟
- 14- إلى أي مدى يمكن أن يؤثر تصور الموظفين للسلطة على حكمهم في عمليات الاختيار؟
- 15- كيف يمكن أن ترتبط السلطة الاجتماعية (الأسر النخبة وكبار المسؤولين) بعمليات الاختيار في الوزارة؟
- 16- ما تقييمك للعدالة التنظيمية في عمليات الاختيار في الوزارة؟
- أ- ما تقييمك للعدالة التنظيمية خلال عمليات الاختيار؟
- ب- ما هو للعدالة التنظيمية قبل وبعد اتخاذ القرارات؟
- ج- ما تقييمك للعدالة التنظيمية في العلاقات الشخصية والحصول على المعلومات لجميع المرشحين خلال عمليات الاختيار؟

Appendix 8 Application form for positions

Sultanate of Oman
 Ministry of Education
 Directorate

Nomination form for the position.....

Part One: filled by the candidate

First: General information

- 1-Name
- 2-Date of birth:
- 3-Place of birth:
- 4-Permanent Address:
- 5-Current Address:
- 6-Material status:
- 7-ID No.:
- 8-Mobile No.:

Second: Career information

- 1-Registration No.
- 2-Date of appointment
- 3-Current Position
- 4-Place of work
- 5-Date of appointment in current position
- 6-Grade
- 7-Office phone number
- 8-Email

Third: Academic Qualifications: starting with the latest qualification, and the points are giving as followed: General diploma (1 point), College Diploma (2 points), Bachelor and higher Diploma (3 points), Master (5 points), PhD (7 points). (7 Points)

No.	Name of qualification	Major	GPA	Date of graduation	Country of the school
1					

2					
3					
4					
5					

Fourth: Position's history, starts with the current position, each position is given one point not exceeding five positions for each candidate (5 points)

Attach copies of all certificates mentioned in this section

No.	Name of position	Type of contract			Year
		appointment	Mandate	Assign	
2					
3					
4					
5					

Fifth: Work experience, the points of this section are giving as followed: five years and less (1 point), 6- 9 (3 points) 10-15 (5 points) 16 and more (8 points)

No.	Years of experience	Points
1	5 and less	
2	6-9 years	
3	10-15 years	
4	16 and more	

Sixth: Professional development (training courses), each course is giving one point, each candidate is allowed to register 10 courses (10 points)

No.	Name of the course	Date of the course	Number of the course's days
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

10			
----	--	--	--

I confirm that all information is given in this form is correct

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Part Two: filled by the panels

First: the annual appraisal , and the points are given as followed: (80-89= 6 points)(90-100= 10 points)c

No.	Year	Annual Appraisal Grade	Class
1			

Two: Total of the CV and annual appraisal

No.	Item	Points
1	The candidacy form (30 points)	
2	Annual Appraisal (10 points)	
Total of points out of 40		

The panel verdict of the candidate:

1-Accept the application form and nominated for the interview in the directorate

2-Decline the application form

Reasons of decline:

Panels members of screening the applications:

No.	Name	Position	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			

Part Three: interview in the directorates

First: the interview form (20 points)

No.	The Area	indicators	Points	points
1	Personal Characteristics	Tact and caring for dress	4	
		Motivation and good manners		
		Confidence		
2	Administrative skills	Awareness of laws and regulations	4	
		Commitment of professional ethics		
		Capability of running different situations		
3	Communication Skills	Ability for making dialogues and persuasions	4	
		Accept other opinions		
		Proper use of communication channels		
4	Professional development	Acknowledge of updates at work	4	
		Participation in conferences, workshops, seminars, studies		
		Participation in different panels inside and outside the Ministry		
5	Readiness for the new position	Awareness of organisational structure	4	
		Awareness of position's responsibilities and duties		
		Ability to adapt with work pressure		
Total points			20	

Second: total of points in the directorate panels

No.	Item	Points	Candidate's points
1	The CV and annual appraisal	40	
2	The interview in the directorate	20	
3	Total points	60	

Third: Members in the directorate's panels

No.	Name	Position	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Fourth: The central panel interview the highest two candidates for each position.

Fourth Part: Interview in the central Panel (40 points)

No.	The Area	indicators	Points	points
1	Personal Characteristics	Tact and caring for dress	8	
		Motivation and good manners		
		Confidence		
		Speed of intuitive and ability of understanding		
		Objectivity and serious		
2	Administrative skills	Awareness of laws and regulations	8	
		Commitment of professional ethics		
		Capability of running different situations		
		Running teamwork		
		Ability for Planning probably		
3	Communication Skills	Ability for making dialogues and persuasions	8	
		Accept other opinions		
		Proper use of communication channels		
		Ability to express own views		
		Building positive relations in the Ministry		
4	Professional development	Acknowledge of updates at work	8	
		Participation in conferences, workshops, seminars, studies		
		Participation in different panels inside and outside the Ministry		
		Awareness of work issues		
		Acknowledge of Ministry's publications		
5	Readiness for the new position	Awareness of organisational structure	8	
		Awareness of position's responsibilities and duties		
		Ability to adapt with work pressure		
		Motivation and enthusiasm for work		
		Visionary plan of developing and changing workplace		

Total points	40	
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Second: Total points for the candidate

No.	Item	Points	Candidate's points
1	The CV , annual appraisal and directorate interview	60	
2	The interview in the central panel	40	
3	Total points	100	

Third: Recommendation of the central panel:

1-Nominate for the position

2-Do not nominate for the position

Reasons:

Third: Members in the central panels

No.	Name	Position	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			