

# **The Effectiveness of Teacher Recruitment and Selection in Oman: An Analysis of Stakeholder Perceptions**

by

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**A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Management Centre; University of Leicester**

June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006

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### **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Aisha and my children: Bothaina, Shareefa, Nabil, Aiman, Faisal, Saud and Saleem

### **CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY**

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

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# **The Effectiveness of Teacher Recruitment and Selection in Oman: An Analysis of Stakeholder Perception**

**Khamis Al Tobi**

## **Abstract**

Oman's public education system has expanded rapidly, with the number of teachers employed rising from 32 in 1970 to more than 36,000 in 2006. Widespread educational reform is currently underway and a number of stakeholders have voiced concerns about the quality of the novice teachers being appointed. This thesis responds to these concerns through an exploration of the practices and processes used to recruit and select primary and secondary teachers for Oman's public schools.

A review of related literature, exploratory analyses and field observations gave rise to a number of research and practical aims. These focused on assessing the extent to which teacher recruitment and selection (R&S) in Oman corresponded, in theory and in practice, with the normative prescriptions found in the best practice literature; exploring the conflicting perceptions of different stakeholders about the effectiveness of these processes, and contributing to the development of theory-based educational policy in Oman.

The empirical study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses. Twenty five semi-structured interviews were conducted with recruiters, head teachers and school district officials. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to cluster samples of newly recruited teachers. 496 completed questionnaires were analysed representing about 8% of the total population.

The study produced two major findings. First, many of the techniques and processes employed in the R&S of teachers in Oman deviate significantly from those that have been shown to be effective elsewhere. Second, there is a widespread feeling amongst novice teachers that their psychological contracts with their employer have been violated and almost half of all teachers surveyed wish to leave the profession.

The findings challenge the widespread community assumption that there is a 'problem with the quality' of new teachers and highlight the importance of managing the expectations and perceptions of appointees throughout the selection and recruitment process.

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, I would like to thank God for the inspiration and faith, which helped me in the completion of this work. I must acknowledge special indebtedness to my Government for providing me with this sponsorship.

Very special thanks, indebtedness and sincere gratitude go to my supervisor Dr. Phil Jones for the enormous amount of support, advice and help he has provided me with throughout the different stages of this thesis. Indeed, his help, guidance and recommendations founded the basis for this achievement. Without his scholarly criticism and encouragement, this study wouldn't have been completed.

I would also like to express my thanks to my co-supervisor Dr. Olga Suhomlinova to whom I am greatly indebted for her suggestions and support.

A special word of gratitude is extended to all those who took part in this research, including officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service, the presidents of teacher-parent associations, recruiters, parents, head teachers, school district directors and teachers.

Thanks are also extended to those people in the Management Centre and the University of Leicester Library for their help and support.

Very special thanks go to my wife and my children for their understanding, patience and support throughout my PhD research. Last but far from least, my sincere thanks go to my brothers and sisters for their moral support during the period of this research.

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# **CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH PROJECT AND STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

## **1.1 The Research Project**

There is a growing interest in the topic of recruitment and selection (R&S) accompanied by increasingly sophisticated theories and research methods (Viteles, 1932; Sangren, 1935; Myers and MacLaurin, 1943; Parnes, 1954; Edwards et al., 1975; Wanous, 1976; Schmidt and Hunter, 1981; Schmidt et al., 1984; Plumbley, 1998; Rynes, 1991; Barber, 1998; Salgado, 1999; Breaugh and Starke, 2000; Anderson, et al., 2004). This growth has been attributed to a variety of factors including a rapid advancement in information technology, the globalisation of modern industries and a growing shortage of talent (Hausknecht et al., 2004) as well as the widespread acknowledgement that organisational effectiveness is directly related to employees' capability and motivation (Michie & West, 2004).

The key conclusions of these studies show that effective R&S practices are crucial to organizational success. They enable organisations to engage high-performing employees who are also satisfied with their jobs and who make a significant contribution to the achievement of organisational goals.

Poor R&S by contrast, is not only expensive but can result in severely negative consequences for an organisation. Hiring personnel who do not fit with the organisation's philosophies and goals can damage production by, for example, adversely affecting the morale and commitment of co-workers and undermining efforts to foster team work. In addition, failing to attract the best talent, or mistakenly rejecting suitable candidates will also reduce organisational effectiveness, especially when labour markets are tight. Hence,

effective R&S is not only the first steps towards organisational excellence, but are also important cost control mechanisms (Parry, 1994; CIPD, 1999; Torrington and Hall, 1998).

Research shows that teachers are the heart of the learning process and that differential teacher effectiveness is the single most influential element in the success of both individual students and of the educational system more generally (Al Busaidi and Bashir, 1997; Hopkins and Stern, 1996; Manoucheehri, 1997; Webber, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rice, 2003). In addition, a number of studies have highlighted the significant positive relationships between effective teacher R&S and school effectiveness (e.g. Wise et al., 1987; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Liu and Johnson, 2003). Although a number of studies have examined the specific processes involved in teacher R&S in English speaking countries including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, these have tended to ignore the teachers' experiences of the hiring process.

There is to date no corresponding evidence from systematic studies of teacher R&S in Oman. Thus, although Omani schools, like other organisations, depend for their success or failure on the recruitment and selection of committed and capable personnel, it is not clear how new teachers are recruited and selected, or if the system results in the employment of the most suitable candidates. In addition, it is not possible to compare the Omani case with other countries, or with the best practice advocated by professional bodies such as the British Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). The lack of research in this area leaves a gap in the theory and practice of teacher R&S at a time when concerns are being voiced in Omani society about the quality of the new teachers emerging from the R&S process.

This research project attempts to address these issues through the achievement of two main aims. The first is to critically evaluate the practices currently used to recruit and select primary and secondary schools teachers in Oman. The second is to investigate key stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of these practices. These two primary aims generated a number of research objectives.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To critically evaluate the current practices used to recruit and select primary and secondary teachers for public schools in Oman.
2. To compare Oman's teacher R&S with best R&S practices described in the professional and research literature.
3. To examine stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher R&S
4. To contribute to the growing body of literature in the area of teacher R&S
5. To provide recommendations that will improve the effectiveness of teacher R&S processes in Oman.

## **1.3 Organisation of Thesis**

The study is divided into eight chapters as illustrated below:

Chapter 1 introduces the study. It provides a general background to the research in terms of explaining the research project, explaining the motives for choosing teacher R&S as an area of study, outlining the statement of the research problem, highlighting the rationale for carrying out the research and setting the structure of the study.

Chapter 2 is divided into four parts and contextualises the study. Part one includes a brief overview of the Sultanate of Oman. Part two contains a review of the development of education and a discussion of the political, economical, social and technological factors that have contributed to shaping the Omani educational system and includes details of the current educational reforms. Part three summarises current teacher R&S policies as presented in official documents. Part four presents the researcher's personal experience as well as key stakeholders' perceptions of the current state of teacher R&S in Oman.

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the past research into R&S. It aims to introduce the reader to the study context by exploring previous research conducted in this area and

reviewing existing literature related to the survey topic. It includes a review of the evidence for 'best practice' and the critical importance of effective teacher R&S.

Chapter 4 explains how the research methodology was developed and how the specific methods employed were chosen, including: the selection of research participants, development of data collection tools, conduction of the fieldwork, recording and managing data and analysing and interpreting the collected data. This chapter also discusses issues related to the validity and reliability of the research tools, their limitations and ethical and confidentiality issues.

Chapter 5 presents and analyses the findings obtained from the qualitative research. It aims to illuminate R&S process applied by the Ministry of Education in hiring teachers. The chapter is divided into two parts. Part one includes the analysis of the official documents that describe the current teacher R&S practices in Oman. Part two presents the analysis of the semi-structured interviews that were designed to gather information on the understandings, thinking, feelings and reactions of a sample of significant stakeholders (recruiters, head teachers, educational districts officials) to the present teacher R&S.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses the results of the quantitative surveys. It provides information on the reactions and perceptions of the newly employed teachers on their experience of the R&S process and the factors they experienced in their orientation process. The chapter also presents answers to the open-ended questions, which aim to obtain new teachers' views on more appropriate R&S practices that may result in better outcomes.

Chapter 7 presents and discusses the analysis of the research data and assesses it against similar research findings and the related literature. The empirical evidence provides the basis for making judgements on the merits and demerits of teacher R&S in Oman and thus will form the basis for recommendations in Chapter Eight.



Chapter 8 seeks to combine the areas covered in the main body of the thesis and summarises the main findings of the study. It also presents some recommendations and suggestions for improvement of the teacher R&S process in Oman. In addition, it highlights the limitations of the present study and puts forward some suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter contextualises the research project by presenting a brief overview of the Sultanate of Oman. It also contains a review of the development of education and a discussion of the political, economical, social and technological factors that contribute to the establishment and the shaping of the new Omani educational reform. It identifies the conditions, demands and requirements for high quality teachers and the effects of these factors on the function of teacher R&S. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the research problem and the underlying rationale for undertaking the study.

### **2.2. Overview of the Sultanate of Oman<sup>1</sup>**

As illustrated in Figure (2.1) the Sultanate of Oman occupies the South-eastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It borders Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the West; the Republic of Yemen in the South; the Strait of Hurmuz in the North and the Arabian Sea in the East. It has an area of 309,500 square km and is therefore similar in size to the UK. The economy is dependent primarily on oil, and this accounts for 90% of the GNP. The Education Sector, according to the Ministry of National Economy (2004), consumes 11.8% of total income which was US \$21.9 billion in 2004. Oman has a population of 2.6 million, 72.8% being Omanis, and the rest expatriates. The official language is Arabic; however English is widely spoken especially in the private sector, educational institutions and hospitals. There are also other languages spoken such as Swahili, Baluchi, Hydarabadi, Mehri and Kumzari (Ministry of National Economy, 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> Supplementary information about Oman (Management and Education) can be found in Appendix (A)

**Figure 2. 1: A map of the Sultanate of Oman<sup>2</sup>**



Source: [www.squ.edu.om/lan/GuideToOmanContents.html](http://www.squ.edu.om/lan/GuideToOmanContents.html)

Oman possesses a very rich historical tradition in terms of the following:

- Recent archaeological discoveries and research have shown that a highly-developed civilisation existed in the country at least 5000 years ago.
- In ancient times, Oman was famous for the export of two very important commodities; frankincense and myrrh, which were exported by Omani ships to places such as Egypt and Rome.
- Oman has a very long history of seafaring and it developed very strong trading links around the world. By the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, Omani merchants were dealing with China and the Malay Peninsula on a regular basis.

<sup>2</sup> It is not a certified map and it is only drawn to illustrate the correct location of the Sultanate.

- Oman reached the height of its power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the creation of an empire on both sides of the Gulf and in East Africa.

However, civil wars and the foreign interference in the domestic affairs of Oman affected the stability, economy and development of the country. Sultan Saeed Bin Taimoor, the father of the present Sultan, who came to power in 1932, attempted to maintain the status quo by resisting changes. His reign was punctuated by uncontrollable civil wars and political uprisings. These factors intervened to make the country extremely backward in every aspect of life, including health, education, housing and communication (Peterson, 2004a; Al Ma'amari, 1992; Taryam, 1987; Ministry of Information; 1999/2004).

1970 was a crucial landmark in the socio-economic development of the Sultanate of Oman when the previous Sultan, Saeed Bin Taimoor was deposed by his son Qaboos<sup>3</sup> in a bloodless coup. The ascension of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to the throne on 23 July 1970 ushered Oman into a new era of renaissance, marked by prosperity, peace and stability which paved the way for social progress and economic prosperity, attributed by some to his open mentality and his Western educational background:

*“Evidence of the ‘modernizing’ intentions of Sultan Qabus is ample. To start with, there is his educational background in the United Kingdom, beginning with schooling in East Anglia and proceeding through Sandhurst and then a brief attachment to local government, again in East Anglia, and an equally brief tour with the British Army of the Rhine. In addition and early on, Qabus authoritatively stamped his personality on the new regime – emphatically making a clean break with the past of his father” Peterson, (2004b: 256)*

The progress made by Oman since 1970 has been nothing short of remarkable. For example, in 1970, there were only 10 km of paved roads. Today, the road network is over 35, 000 km. In 1970, there was only one hospital in the whole country; now there are 50 central hospitals and more than 150 health centres. In 2000, Oman was ranked as the eighth

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<sup>3</sup> Sometimes spelled Qabus

in the world for the provision of the best overall health care; however, it leads the world in regard to health care efficiency (Ministry of Information, 2004).

## **2.3 Education**

### **2.3.1 Development of Education**

Prior to 1970 education was not considered to be a basic right of children in Oman. In 1970 there were only three secular male primary schools in the country, with a total enrolment of 909 students, personally selected by the previous Sultan. The first of these schools was opened in 1940 to commemorate the birthday of the present Sultan. Two of these schools were in Muscat (capital of Oman) and the third one, which was opened in 1959, was in Salalah (a Southern town in Oman) (Raziq, 1988; Ministry of Information, 2000).

Traditionally, education in Oman took the form of “Kuttab” which in Arabic means a gathering of boys and girls to learn the Quran, Arabic language and basic mathematics. The teaching and learning usually took place in mosques, houses or even under the shade of trees. It should not be regarded as surprising that education was commonly conducted in mosques, because mosques are not only meant for worship but they are also meant for use as centres for religious teaching and political affairs (Al Isaaie, 2001). The Kuttab were schools with a single teacher who was responsible for everything, from organising the teaching methods to selecting the text books and content of their teaching (Shammas, 2001). These schools were established by the community. Parents selected the teacher and gave them the entire responsibility for educating their children. Besides the Holy Quran, supportive text books were selected by the teacher. These books were mainly related to religious science and Arabic grammar. Children from the age of six attended Kuttab and they usually left school after successfully completing a complete recitation of the Quran and having satisfied the teacher that they had acquired a functional level of reading and writing. However, students interested in continuing their studies could attend other higher schools that were established by Islamic scholars, where students continued learning religious science, Arabic and Islamic law (Shareeat). Religious scholars examined students

from these establishments and accordingly they were assigned various posts in the government such as judges and Zakat collectors (An Islamic tax which is usually 2.5% of the annual income of an invested capital) (Al Isaai, 2001, Al Weheebi, 2001).

After the new Sultan's rise to power, education received his close attention. The Sultan realised that educating the people was not just one of several key priorities, but should be given precedence above all others. This emphasis is clear in his first words to the nation in August, 1970:

*"Education is my first concern when I observed a crumbling situation from my small home in Salalah and therefore I noticed that there is a prior need to direct the efforts towards spreading education.... The most important priority is education, and we will educate our children even if under the trees' shadow"* (Ministry of Information, 2001: 36)

Since then education has been given the greatest importance and has been put in the forefront of the government's plans. Indeed, free education has become a basic right for all male and female youngsters, Omanis and expatriates, aged between six and eighteen years (Ministry of Information, 2004). This governmental emphasis is reflected in the rapid growth of schools, students and teachers as illustrated in Figures 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 (Ministry of Education, 2003).

**Figure 2. 2: School population of Oman 1969 – 2003**

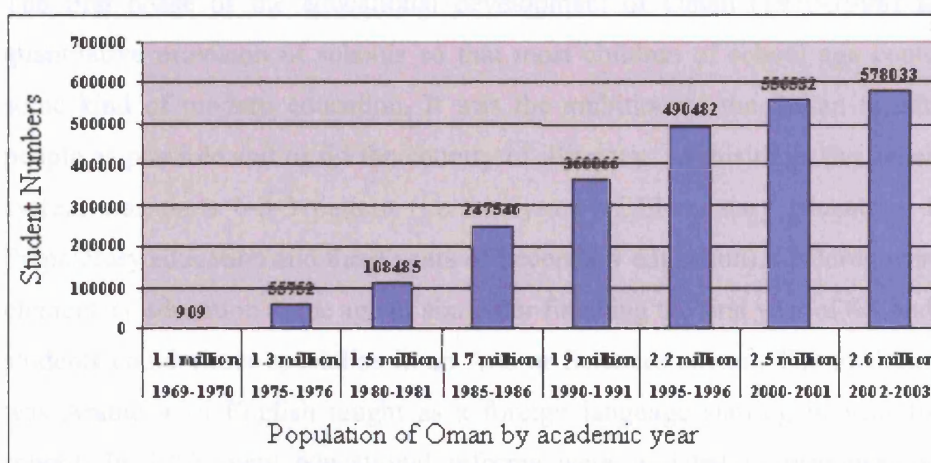




Figure 2. 3: Number of State Schools in Oman 1969 - 2003

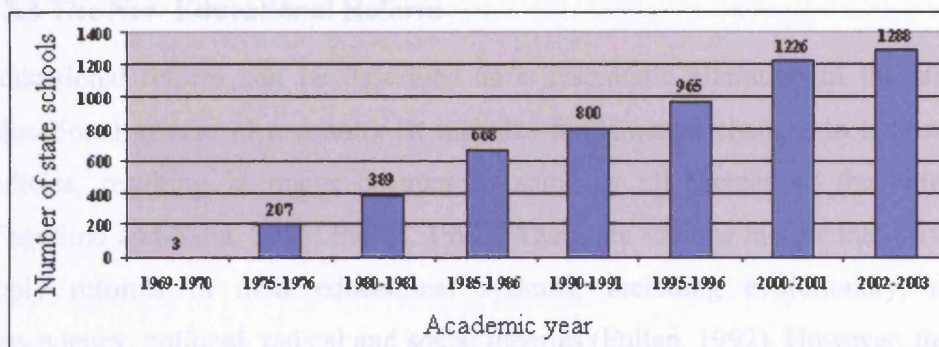
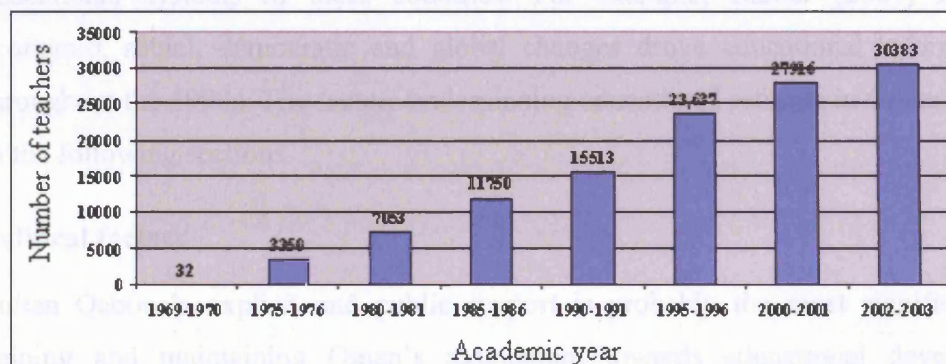


Figure 2. 4: Number of state employed primary and secondary teachers in Oman 1969-2003



### 2.3.2 General Education

The first phase of the educational development of Oman (1970-1998) focused on the quantitative provision of schools so that most children of school age could benefit from some kind of modern education. It was the ambition of the Sultan to educate as many people as possible and to rid the country of illiteracy. At this time, the general educational system was on a 6-3-3 pattern (i.e. six years of Elementary education, three years of Preparatory education and three years of Secondary education). Children were enrolled into elementary education at the age of six. After finishing the first year of Secondary education, students could either specialise in an Arts or Sciences stream. The medium of instruction was Arabic with English taught as a foreign language starting in year four of primary school. In 1998, new educational reforms were initiated in response to a number of

challenges and pressures faced by the government, which are outlined in the following sections (Ministry of Education, 1994; Ministry of Education, 2000).

### **2.3.3 The New Educational Reform**

Educational reform can be described as a systematic alteration in the structure of the educational system of a country. It includes fundamental changes in national educational policies, resulting in major changes to some or all themes of the education system (Fagerlind and Saha, 1985, Fullan, 1992). There are various factors that drive countries to apply reforms in their educational systems, including evolutionary, modernisation, dependency, political, radical and social theories (Fullan, 1992). However, the fundamental explanations for applying new reforms are the problems and the needs facing the educational systems in these countries. For example, Barber (2001) indicates that economic, social, democratic and global changes drove educational reform in the UK throughout the 1990s. The factors underpinning educational reforms in Oman are examined in the following sections.

#### **Political factors**

Sultan Qaboos's explicit and public support is probably the most significant factor in gaining and maintaining Oman's momentum towards educational development. His personal vision has played a central role in the shaping of the educational philosophy in Oman. He continues to emphasise that education is the "soul of the nation" and the "tool with which to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century":

*The challenges of the future are enormous. Enlightened mentality, comprehensive knowledge and high technical skills are essential to meet them. Therefore, it is necessary for the education system to work hard to provide these requirements in good time in order to achieve these goals in the development of the community, so the community may keep pace with those in other fields. This is the task that education system must shoulder. It is the duty of every one of us to work to its success (Ministry of Information, 2001: 280)*

In addition, Royal Decree No. 101/96, issued on 6 Nov 1996 by the Sultan of Oman, sets out the educational principles of Oman as following:



- Education is a fundamental element for the progress of society, which the State fosters and endeavours to make available to all.
- Education aims to raise and develop general cultural standards, promote scientific thought, kindle the spirit of enquiry, meet the needs of the economic and social plans, and create a generation strong in body and moral fibre, proud of its nation, country and heritage, and committed to safeguard their achievements.
- The State provides public education, combats illiteracy and encourages the establishment of private schools and institutes under State supervision and in accordance with the provisions of the Law.
- The State fosters and conserves the national heritage, and encourages and promotes the sciences, literature, and scientific research.

Thus, there is a political will and steady commitment by the Government to achieving the goal of universal basic education and recognition of its centrality in the realisation of Oman's long-term strategic goals. However, the political environment and the surrounding circumstances have also influenced these educational principles. For example, a number of changes and alterations have been made in the syllabus due to international pressure and the wish of the Omani government to contribute positively to the Middle-East peace negotiations. Thus, education has been characterised by flexible governmental arrangements and the emergence of new political dynamics (Al Hinaee, 2002).

### **Economic factors**

The economic forces influencing education in Oman can be divided into two principle categories. The first concerns the health of the national economy. The second concerns Oman's readiness to compete in a transformed global economy.

Concerns about the health of the national economy: The Government of Oman has committed itself to providing free education for all its citizens (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 1996). This strong political stance has been successful so far and has received constant financial backing. However, the economic recession in many parts of the world, and the continuous decrease in the quantity of oil produced by Oman have put budgetary constraints and pressures on the education sector, just as they have done on other sectors of

government. The Minister of National Economy in his address in Majlis Al Shura<sup>4</sup> in June, (2005) indicated that oil production fell 15% in 2004 and that this downward trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. In addition, Oman is numbered amongst those countries that suffer from water shortage (Al Shaqsi, 2004). This means that agriculture is only possible to some extent for local consumption and cannot be relied upon for economic development. It is also limited by a lack of skilled Omani workers (Ministry of Labour, 2003).

Preparedness for the global economy: Murphy and Adams (1998) indicate that there is a close link between national economic growth and schooling. Oman has joined the world's free trade treaties and is now required to compete with other emerging nations as well as global organisations. Therefore, the Omani educational system needs to provide young Omanis with the knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of globalisation. However, studies by organisations such as the UN (1993) and The World Bank (1997) indicate that the education Omani students receive in their schools was inadequate, and that there was a mismatch between educational outcomes and the needs of the local labour market (Al Hammami, 1999). In particular, the general education system was unable to match the rapidly changing scientific and technological requirements of the contemporary workplace (Al Zakwani, 1997). These reports concluded that inadequacies were likely to continue indefinitely unless major alterations were made to the educational system. In addition, the past decade has seen an increase in the number of unemployed Omanis and a corresponding increase in the number of skilled jobs occupied by foreign workers. Oman's 2003 population census showed that expatriate workers accounted for more than 60% of the labour force but only 27% of the total population of Oman (Ministry of National Economy, 2003).

These census figures provided additional impetus for educational reforms, and the Ministry of Education was forced to accelerate its efforts, giving more attention to consolidating

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<sup>4</sup> Majlis Al Shura: a consultative council elected by the people to represent them

gains, and providing educational outcomes in order to Omanise (replacing expatriates with Omanis) positions and systems and to promote the national workforce in building a multi-resource economy (Al Adawi, 2004).

### **C) Social factors**

Educational systems in Oman have been influenced by the society's desire to preserve its social values and the government's wish to reconcile the teaching of Islam with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since 1970, educational reforms have adopted a philosophy that incorporates a well-defined approach and embraces a general principle to retain the culture and heritage of the country without losing sight of the need to modernise. Raziq (1988: 27- 28) claims that Oman's educational philosophy is distinctive because it is:

*1) Humanistic in its pursuit of Oman's welfare among nations, 2) Arab-Islamic in obtaining its ideological cultural inspiration from genuine Arab and Islamic values and 3) ambitious in seeking a better life for the people of Oman within the framework of characteristic beliefs and inspiration 4) designed to accommodate the aims of contemporary education as well as the present needs of the Omani societies.*

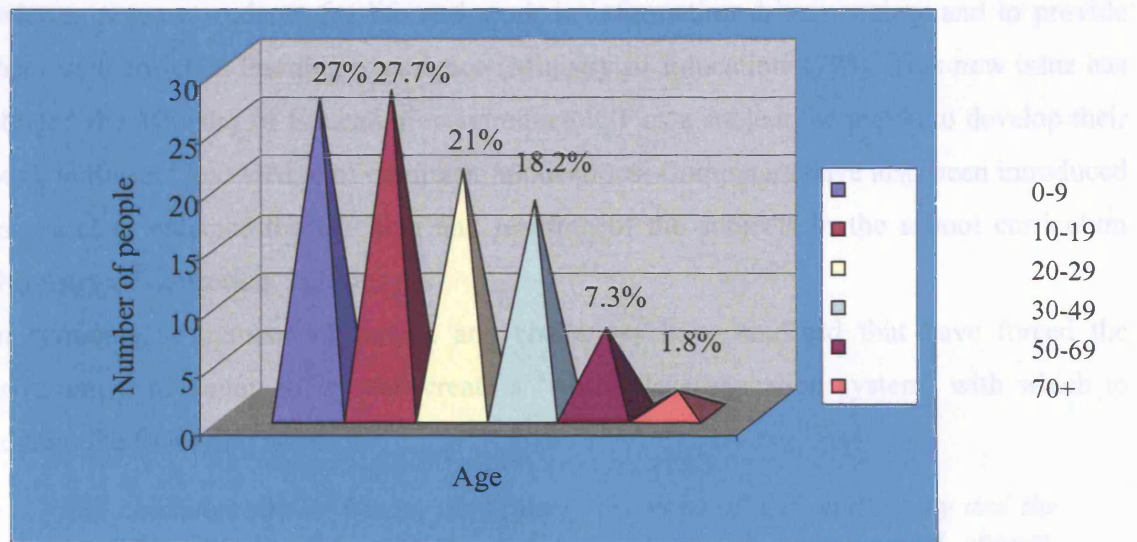
Social factors such as gender, traditional norms and tribal values have also played a vital role in shaping the educational system in Oman. For example, the new educational reform proposed the coeducation of boys and girls in their primary schools and the employment of both male and female primary teachers. There was however, strong resistance from the community, which forced the Ministry to change its plans and to prohibit male teachers from being employed at the primary level. This change in policy will make all male primary teachers redundant by the year 2010. It will mean that these teachers will need to be replaced with an equivalent number of female teachers, but that the pool of potential candidates will have been halved (The Director General of General Education, Personal Contact, May, 2005).

Social and economic stability have resulted in dramatic increases in the numbers of children of school age. A report issued by United Nation Development Plans (UNDP, 2004) classifies Oman as the world's second fastest growing population at 4.9% per annum.

Statistics show an annual increase of 50% in the number of people who subscribe to the internet (Ministry of National Economy, 2004).

The 2003 population census showed that 55% of Oman's population is under the age of twenty (Ministry of National Economy, 2003). Figure 2.5 illustrates the distribution of population by age groups:

**Figure 2.5 Oman's 2003 population distributed by age group**



The children of expatriate workers increase the number of children receiving a free public education by tens of thousands. This unprecedented growth in educational demand has put huge pressures on the educational system and infrastructure. Hundreds of schools have been built and thousands of teachers have been trained and recruited. The continued growth in the school age population, increasing Omanisation and the exclusion of men from primary teaching mean that these pressures are likely to continue increasing in the immediate future.

#### **D) New Technological Factors (Information Communication Technology)**

Computer usage is now spreading at a remarkable pace in Omani society. This reflects in part the enthusiasm of the Omani people to learn about new technology and reap its benefits. It also reflects the efforts of the Omani government to bring Oman into the global community by providing state-of-the-art facilities, and therefore, to advance its economy and industry as well as social life (Ministry of Information, 2000). In this context, national

statistics show an annual increase of 30% in the number of people who subscribe to the internet (Ministry of National Economy, 2004).

The 'Oman Vision 2020' strategic planning conference recommended that the Ministry of Education should look, as a long-term goal, to introduce computer technology as an integral part of the curriculum in all grades and most subjects in Omani schools. This would help in order to prepare students for life and work in information driven society and to provide them with enriched learning experience (Ministry of Education 1995). This new issue has obliged the Ministry of Education to introduce ICT as a subject for pupils to develop their basic skills and knowledge of computer applications. Computers have also been introduced as a tool to enhance the teaching and learning of the subjects in the school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000).

In summary, a number of factors and challenges have emerged that have forced the government of Oman to try and create a 'world-class education system' with which to address the following issues:

*The challenge facing Oman, particularly the need of self- sufficiency and the need to diversify the economy and keep pace with technological change, require new educational goals to prepare Omanis for life and work in the new conditions created by the modern global economy. These will require a high degree of adaptability and a strong background in science and mathematics in order to apply independently rapidly changing technologies to Oman's needs. The proposed educational reforms are designed to achieve the knowledge and mental skills and attitudes that young Omanis will need to learn and to adapt to the very different future most of them will face (Ministry of Education, Education Reform Development, 1997: 8).*

It should be noted that high quality infrastructure and resources have been provided to ensure the success of the new system in delivering its set objectives. These include educational resource centres and science labs as well as physical educational facilities. In a move to cope with educational development at a global level, new syllabuses have been introduced with an emphasis on harnessing the advancements in science and technology. It was also decided to start teaching English language from the first grade in primary schools; life skills were incorporated as new subjects, and contact hours for mathematics and science

were increased. In addition, to allow students to best benefit from their teachers and class facilities, the number of students in each class has been reduced to a maximum of twenty (Ministry of Education, 2000).

However, all these efforts to improve the educational infrastructure will achieve little if not accompanied by similar attention to the quality of classroom teachers, a point recognised by Fullan (1992: 12) who asserts: *"nothing is more central to reform than the selection and development of teachers"*. Thus, the effective recruitment, selection, induction, retention and training of teachers become critical elements in achieving educational reform in Oman.

## **2.4 Employment**

### **2.4.1 Public employment system**

Prior to 1970, Oman was isolated from the modern world and was not recognised as a member of the UN or the Arab League (Ministry of Information, 2000). Furthermore, there was a very basic administrative system lacking financial and technical resources (Peterson, 2004c) and an absence of employment law with which to regulate employees or institutions and to supervise personal policies and regulations (Allen, 1987). Muhrami (1993) argues that no government in a modern sense existed in Oman at this time, and only traditional aspects of administrative structure were in operation. Recruitment and other personnel activities were carried out traditionally and posts were offered according to tribal and traditional values and favours.

The civil sector has witnessed a rapid growth since 1970. For example, the number of employees has grown from 3,000 in 1970 to 98,723 employees in 2004. To this can be added 17,000 people employed by civil authorities and the Diwan of the Royal Court (Ministry of National Economy, 2004). The sudden socio-economic development in the country has been the main reason for this rapid growth and public employment has become the career objective of many Omanis, not least because the terms of service are generally more attractive than those offered in the private sector (Al Lamky, 1998). Nevertheless this

rapid growth has resulted in more complexity and has resulted in greater responsibilities being placed on the government and there has been an urgent need to develop appropriate personnel systems (Kschichian, 1995; Al Maskry, 1992; Looney, 1990).

Oman created its Basic Law in 1996, an act still considered to be the most important legislative development in modern Omani history (Rippenburg, 1998). It includes 80 articles that clarify all aspects of the state apparatus. In relation to R&S it declares:

*“Justice, equality and equality of opportunity between Omanis are the pillars of society; guaranteed by the state.... Citizens are considered equal in taking up public employment according to the provision of law” (Ministry of Legal Affairs (1996), Basic Law: Article, 12).*

However, the current Oman system provides government ministers with complete authority to adjust the rules and the regulations as they see fit. A situation that has led Recabi (2001) to describe the current system as a “one man show” because, he argues, the authority provided to ministers suspends citizens’ rights to fairly compete for public posts. The currently unlimited power of the ministers together with tribal and traditional values provide scope for the R&S of civil servants to be directly affected by uncontrolled bias and favouritism which in many other societies would be considered unacceptable. The U.S Department of State Annual Report (2004: 5), which comments on human rights and equality issues around the world, reflects these concerns:

*“The announced Basic Law in Oman prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, ethic origin, race, religion, language, sect, place of residence and social class. However, decrees to implement its provisions have not been promulgated. Institutional and cultural discrimination based on gender, race, religion and social status exists”.*

According to Recabi (2001) the most serious administrative difficulty Oman has been facing is the rapid expansion of bureaucracy. He also cites a lack of an effective R&S system that can bring the best qualified employees to public organisations, and attributes this to the power of uneducated traditional high ranking personnel in the decision making posts and the tribal and traditional values they have. Part of this is due to cultural beliefs that the final consent lies in the top person of the organisation (Al Ghailani, 2005).

Although, the cultural and traditional factors played a major role in creating bureaucracy in Oman, there are other factors that have contributed to the existence of such type of management. When the new national leadership emerged in 1970, there was an urgent need to create an infrastructure of management programme capable of supporting the rapid social and economic changes that were taking place and were expected to take place in the future. However, because of the prevalence of illiteracy and the lack of competent and qualified nationals, Oman had to rely on expatriate workers at all levels to cope with the pace of changes. For example, in 1977, half of the Sultanate Civil Service employees were unable to read or write (Al-Khayat, 1988). Therefore, as in most Gulf States, a large number of public sector jobs were occupied by Egyptian officials who were some of the few Arab people considered at that time to be qualified to occupy these vacant jobs. These Egyptian civil servants brought with them the Egyptian way of doing things and Oman's public institutions adopted classical bureaucratic methods and approaches to organising and managing.. Egyptian experts were also responsible for the codification and formalisation of Omani Civil Service Law. This, according to Al-Khayat (1988) resulted in the importation of Egyptian labour having 'double impact' on the bureaucratisation of Oman's public bodies.

Historical factors have also contributed to the existence of bureaucracy in Oman. According to Peterson (2004) the present Sultan is similar to his traditional father in keeping the essential reins of power very much in his own hands. Both have been described as loath to delegate responsibility to others, including senior members of their own family. Peterson (2004:13) also argues that:

*"The Sultanate, as it exists today, would seem to fit most closely to Eisenstadt's description of absolutist authority as existed in pre-revolutionary France, 'which was promulgated by the central royal-bureaucratic center that attempted to present itself as the central locus of authority by virtue of its being the bearer of rational enlightenment. Or put another way, the figure of the Sultan may correspond to Weber's charismatic authority'".*

The Sultan is the Head of State; the highest and final authority; the Supreme Commander of the armed forces; the Prime Minister; the Foreign Secretary; the Defence Secretary, and;



the Finance Secretary. The Sultan presides over the cabinet of ministers. He appoints and dismisses deputy prime ministers, ministers, under-secretaries and senior judges. All Ministries have central hierarchies which are determined by Royal Decrees (Basic Statute of the State, 1996). So in this sense the structure is strictly hierarchical and bureaucratic authority devolves from the top to the bottom with each office or position under the direct and strict control of that immediately above it in the organisation chart. This bureaucratic form of organising is found in all Omani state organisations and government associations. Government employees are expected to act on the formal decisions made by their superiors and to strictly adhere to the regulations and rules that organise the work of these institutions, (Al Busaidi, 2004). This type of bureaucracy is not unique to Oman but is found in many Arab countries especially the Persian Gulf countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (Al-Romaihi, 1977; Barakat, 1991; Peterson, 2004).

Furthermore, the historical context of Omani society as in other Gulf countries appears to have contributed to the growth of bureaucracy in its public organisations. The existence of sheikhs is a significant factor in the spread of classical bureaucracy in these countries (Cottrell, 1980; Pridham, 1988; Mahjoub et al., 1997; Neal et al., 2005). Sheikhs are not elected by the people but inherit power from their fathers. They shoulder the responsibility of their tribes and they generally tend to be authoritarian. Sheikhs in the Arab world in general and in Gulf countries in particular are granted high degree of authority, respect and influence in government organisations which strongly influence bureaucracy (Mahjoub, et al., 1997; Neal et al., 2005). In this sense, the work relationships between superiors and subordinates are based on fear or respect as put by Abdalla and Al Homoud, (2001:6):

*“Juniors yield to seniors and they are expected to speak to their seniors in a modest and unassuming way. Juniors do not strongly oppose their superiors and if the situation is likely to result in confrontation they may choose to withdraw”.*

Omani society is composed of a number of tribal groups or clans with each tribe having a sheikh or leader who acts as the ruler in his home town or village. It can be argued that the

Sultan of Oman the 'Sheikh of Sheikhs'. This relationship with subordinate tribal leaders is symbolised and cemented during the ritual of the Sultan's Annual Convoy or Caravan, during which the royal court travels around the country and the Sultan holds audiences with the tribal sheikhs.

It is clear that the nature of public sector management in Oman is rooted in classical bureaucratic approaches to organising; and that these approaches are congruent with, and incorporate, the traditional power and authority structures of the pre-existing tribal society. Thus, the Ministry of Civil Service has been under increasing pressure to change some of its existing practices and ensure that its system allows the employment of the best qualified applicants in accordance with Oman's Basic Law (Al Ghailani, 2005).

#### **2.4.2 R&S of Civil Servants**

In Oman, R&S of all the organisations in the civil sector is administratively under the authority of the Ministry of Civil Service, which is responsible for the organisational, administrative and financial aspects of the employment process in all ministries. Each government ministry or government department specifies its required number of employees and then contact the Ministry of Civil Service to conduct the R&S process.

According to the Ministry of Civil Service (2003), the rationale behind centralising the R&S system was to apply equal opportunities to all applicants and abolish favouritism. The principle of equality is protected by the Oman Basic Law (1996) and the related official regulations issued by the Sultan or The Council of the Ministers. The Ministry has formally adopted an equal opportunities employment policy to reflect this principle in the employment practices of all ministries. The R&S policy sets out how to ensure, as far as possible, that the best people are recruited on merit and that the recruitment process is free from bias and discrimination (Ministry of Civil Service Recruitment Documents, 2000-2003). The Ministry has pledged itself to continue to uphold this principle by promoting the continued development of employment and other policies, procedures and practices, which do not discriminate unfairly between Omanis. It aims to implement positive action

programmes to remove barriers to equality and promote concepts of diversity and equality of opportunity in all of its activities (Ministry of Civil Service, 2002).

### **2.4.3 Teacher R&S**

The policies and procedures for R&S of teachers in Oman follow the Civil service code and are derived from the Basic Law of the Sultanate (1996) and the Civil Service Law (981). They include a commitment to being open and honest throughout the R&S process; employment practices that are based on equal opportunity, with the final decision being founded solely on merit. The specific practices included in teacher R&S are analysed in more detail in Chapter five.

### **2.4.4 Conditions and Requirements of Joining the Teaching Profession**

In Oman, teachers must meet certain minimum requirements in order to be appointed as a member of the teaching profession. Only candidates who have had formal training in education are accepted. The Ministry of Education requires a university degree in education for appointment of teachers.

In addition, the applicant should demonstrate competence in the following areas: a) Subject expertise. b) Teaching and professional skills. c) Interpersonal skills. d) Knowledge and understanding congruent with the new educational reforms, which includes: Multi-cultural education, education that is connected with values, environment, health, population, new techniques, arts, information and development. Teachers are employed in the Ministry's schools with terms and conditions similar to those of other government employees who hold the same qualifications and have the same experience (Ministry of Education, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2002).

## **2.5 Statement of the Research Problem**

A new educational reform has been introduced in Oman that encompasses the entire primary and secondary curriculum and includes the introduction of new subjects and an updating of teaching methods. At the same time, there has been huge and rapid growth in

the number of schools, students and teaching staff. Besides, the government has been gradually Omanising (replacing expatriates with Omanis) the public jobs that are currently occupied by expatriates, particularly teaching posts. All these trends have resulted in unprecedented demands for knowledgeable, competent, skilled, motivated and committed teachers to staff this modern educational system. Indeed, researchers are in agreement that if students are to be well-served, schools must be able to recruit teachers who have not only the essential teaching skills and knowledge but above all, an interest in teaching, and enthusiasm to remain in the profession (Wise et al. 1987; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Calwell, 1993; Liu and Johnson, 2003; Rice, 2003).

However, in parallel with this period of rapid educational expansion, there has been a growing community perception that there has been a significant decline in the quality of teachers recently appointed to Oman's schools. And it was this tension between the high aims of the reforms and the problems reported by stakeholders that first drew the researcher's attention to this topic of enquiry.

### **2.5.1 Field Observations: Key stakeholders' perceptions.**

As illustrated in Chapter 1, this research has come about as a result of the researcher's personal experiences and as a result of the introductory discussion he had with senior stakeholders (His Excellency the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education; His Excellency the Special Advisor to the Ministry of Civil Service; Members of Al Shura Council, Director General of R&S in the Ministry of Civil Service; head teachers, parents and school districts officials).

His Excellency, the Special Advisor of the Ministry of Civil Service indicated that for political, social and tribal reasons, and with the absence of a sound administration system, and objective recruitment criteria, jobs always seem to be offered to certain people, irrespective of their performance during the R&S process. In addition, His Excellency stated his belief that the current teacher R&S practices are ineffective in meeting the needs of the students, the demands of the new education reform, and the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup>

century. In general, the Special Advisor of the Ministry of Civil Service thought that the methods utilised when hiring new teachers did not reflect the importance of this process and the outcomes usually lacked reliability and validity.

Concerns and dissatisfaction about current teacher R&S were also raised by other key stakeholders. They stated that teacher R&S needed to be revised as the current policies and practices do not yield the quality of teachers needed for implementing the new educational reform.

In addition, there appears to be a community view that the quality of teachers as a whole is declining. Parents forwarded this view to the Al Shura Council which resulted in the topic being extensively discussed in the Council at a number of different meetings. In 2001, a committee of the Al Shura Council was formed to study issues related to the new educational reforms. This committee concluded that teachers were poorly qualified and poorly selected for appointment to teaching posts. Al Riyami, a member of this sub-committee stated:

*"We are very pleased with the new educational reform with such clear and fundamental aims and goals. However, for such reforms to bear fruit the Ministry of Education must take into account different crucial issues that are associated with the implementation of this promising reform and the key amongst them all is the teacher. A committee from Al Shura Council was formed to investigate different educational aspects, which are related to the new reforms. One of this committee's views was that the right teachers were not being recruited for our schools" (Interviewed by the researcher, April, 2002).*

The researcher interviewed the presidents of parent-teacher associations as well as head teachers and parents in seven Omani provinces. The stakeholders all reported a belief that the quality of teachers recruited for Oman's schools was deteriorating.

*"Frankly speaking, I do not think that the newly recruited teachers have gone through a genuine R&S process. I have seen many newly employed teachers who lack the attributes that are associated with the profession including knowledge, skills and commitment to work" (A Teacher-Parent Association President, January, 2002).*

*“As a head teacher for twelve years, I just want to comment that the new teachers are not to the standard of our expectations in terms of subject knowledge, teaching skills, interest in teaching and other personal qualities that teachers should possess” (A Head teacher, April, 2002).*

They indicated that new teachers’ ineffectiveness was evidenced by the low achievements of current students when compared with previous years. These low achievements were summarised as difficulties in reading, writing, life skills and low motivation toward learning. Teachers were universally blamed for these poor results. There was widespread agreement amongst stakeholders that the majority of new teachers lacked subject knowledge; did not seem to have an interest in teaching; were careless and set low standards for children; and were poorly disciplined. Stakeholders reported a belief that new teachers do not have the teaching skills required to carry out their duties successfully. All these issues led stakeholders to worry about their children’s future and the value gained for the money spent on teachers’ salaries.

### **2.5.2 Researcher’s Personal Experience**

The researcher's direct experience as a teacher (1988-91), deputy head teacher (1991-1992) and head teacher (1992-2000) in Oman’s public schools led him to believe that the widespread weaknesses of newly employed teachers and their comparative lack of professional capacity should be treated more seriously and critically. After researching the related documents and reports which he obtained from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service and through his formal and informal contacts with various stakeholders, the researcher came to realise that the current teacher R&S system was problematic and urgently needed addressing if Oman’s educational reforms were to be successful. In addition to the views of stakeholders, reported in the previous section, preliminary field-work revealed a number of related issues:

- There are many newly qualified teachers who do not enter teaching jobs after they graduate (Ministry of Civil Service, 2005). This indicates that the appointment of inappropriate teachers may have more to do with poor R&S practices and/or the attractiveness of teaching as a career, rather than labour market shortages

- In Oman, it is extremely difficult to dismiss incompetent teachers once they are hired. This means that schools have to cope with poor teachers. Often, the only action schools can take is to assign those teachers to non-teaching jobs which in turn leads schools to suffer from a shortage of teaching staff as the posts that are supposed to be allocated to teaching are occupied by teachers who cannot be trusted in front of a class.
- Promotion is available in theory to all teachers, both males and females. Promotion is usually on the basis of length of service; however, government bodies can only promote employees if their payroll budgets allow this. As a result, government departments with surplus budgets are able to promote their employees faster than those, including the Ministry of Education, which always suffer from financial shortages.
- The Ministry of Education's personnel documents claim that teachers enjoy high social status. Teachers in theory have the respect of parents, students and the Ministry's officials. They also receive a special teaching allowance, which makes their salaries higher than those of other civil employees who are on the same salary grade (Ministry of Education, 2002).

All these issues need to be informed by an understanding of current teachers R&S policies, processes and practices. It was with a view to developing such an understanding that this research study was conducted.

## **2.6 Research Aims**

According to Maxwell (1998), research aims are concerned with gaining insights into the phenomenon under investigation, while practical aims are concerned with accomplishing a goal by meeting a need or changing a situation. From this perspective, the broad research aims of this study were to understand how various stakeholders perceived the effectiveness of teacher R&S policies, processes and practices. The broad practical aims were to use this information to support the new educational reforms by changing teacher R&S. In addition, the study aims to contribute to the literature in this area; to examine the extent to which best

practice from other countries can be applied to teacher R&S in Oman and to contribute to the development of educational policy.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the context within which the research was conceptualised and conducted. It has highlighted the need for high quality teachers to implement the new educational reforms in Oman. However, key stakeholders claim that current teacher R&S is not based on effective practice and the wrong teachers are being appointed. If this is the case, not only may the current teacher R&S practices not be supporting the implementation of the new educational reforms but they may actually be hindering them.

The next chapter reviews what is already known about R&S generally and the R&S of teachers more specifically.



## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter of the thesis provides a preview of literature related to R&S. A preliminary review of the literature was carried out at the commencement of the research project and further research was conducted throughout the study to help in the analysis of the results obtained from this research.

There is a vast volume of literature related R&S, most of which has been conducted in non-educational settings. This chapter limits its examination to the central and/or critical debates and discussions of R&S in general and teacher R&S in particular. Information gathered in this review will be used to contextualise the arguments and conclusions presented in later chapters.

### **3.2 R&S Definition and Purpose**

R&S according to Breugh (1992) involves those organisational activities that influence the number and/or type of applicants who apply for a vacancy and/or affect whether an applicant who applies for the job is accepted. Whereas, Lewis (1987: 29) distinguishes between 'recruitment' and 'selection' by arguing:

*"Recruitment is the activity that generates a pool of applicants, who have the desire to be employed by the organisation, from which those suitable can be selected.... Selection is the activity in which an organization uses one or more methods to assess individuals with a view to making a decision concerning their suitability to join that organization, to perform tasks which may not be specified".*

Thus, recruitment can be defined as searching for and obtaining probable job applicants in sufficient numbers and quality from which the organisation can choose the most appropriate people to fill the available job requirements (Barber, 1998). Whereas, selection

is the procedure of gathering information for the purpose of assessing and choosing who should be employed in particular jobs (Taylor, 1998).

The main purpose of R&S is often seen as the need to match people to work (Roberts, 2003). According to Castetter (1981) the R&S process presents a propitious opportunity to correct problems that exist in the organisation relating to affirmative action and staff balance. Whereas, Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994: 319) summarise the aims of R&S as:

- Determining the organisation's present and future needs in conjunction with human resource planning and job analysis.
- Increasing the pool of qualified job applicants at minimum cost to the organisation.
- Helping increase the success rate of the (subsequent) selection process by reducing the number of obviously under-qualified or over-qualified job applicants.
- Helping reduce the probability that job applicants, once recruited and selected, will leave the organisation after only a short period of time, by providing applicants with sufficient information about the organisation and target position to allow them to self-select themselves out of the process before being engaged.
- Meeting the organisation's legal and social obligations regarding the composition of the workforce.
- Increasing organisational and individual effectiveness in the short term and the long term.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of various techniques and locations for recruiting a wide range of applicants.

### **3.3 The Importance of R&S**

Contemporary business organisations are confronted with a huge number of daunting challenges associated with globalisation, the technological transformation of business, and the growth of communication technologies (Offermann & Gowing, 1990; Rynes, 1991; Langan, 2002; Lavigna & Hays, 2004). These technical, economical, political and social challenges have led organisations to explicitly acknowledge their reliance on human

resources to accomplish their objectives and have forced them to focus on the way they recruit and select their workforce (Baird & Meshoulam, 1988; Barber, 1998). Roberts (2003: 1) identifies R&S as the most important task in the field of HRM, and Plumbley (1985: 8) emphasises the importance of these processes by describing them as:

*“...not only concerned with engaging a required number of people: [but] also concerned with measuring their quality. It is not only a matter of satisfying the agency’s present needs; it is an activity which influence the shape of the agency’s future and its surroundings. Its cumulative results predetermine the future health of the entire system”.*

Rioux and Bernthal (2003) conducted a study based on survey results from 64 Australian members of the DDI HR Benchmark Group. The findings indicated that organisations with highly effective selection systems were significantly more likely to have experienced improvements in business and employee outcomes than those without these systems. Similarly, Cable and Turban (2001) observed a strong link between human resource management (HRM) practices and organisational effectiveness on the one hand and on the other hand, the quality of people yielded by the R&S practices affecting the success of HRM practices. This indicates that the ability of HRM practices to positively impact on organisational effectiveness is rooted to a significant extent in the effectiveness of recruitment practices. Therefore, applying successful R&S practices can help an organisation in employing and retaining top talent who will contribute to enhancing the organizational performance (Ferris et al, 1998). Similar findings have been reported by Delaney and Huselid (1996), Appelbaum and Batt (1994) and Huselid (1995).

### **3.4 The Influence of R&S on Teacher Quality**

The need to improve the quality of teachers is almost universally recognised. Erickson and Shinn (1977: 31) have identified poor staffing decisions as:

*“... a poor use of public funds and the cause of irretrievable damage to children when they are deprived of the best teachers available”.*

Lanier (1986) has argued that the promotion of a high quality of learning will be ineffective unless it is accompanied by improvements in the standard of teachers being recruited.

Eggleston (1992) conceptualises the high quality classroom teacher using a conceptual framework borrowed from the private sector, describing them as an important managers generating a product, helping to market it, and jointly responsible for the success and failure of the overall enterprise.

These views suggest that efforts to improve an education system should be accompanied by efforts to find appropriate teachers. This in turn requires the existence of effective R&S practices that can successfully bring the most efficient teachers to schools. Trank et al. (2002) provide evidence of this and conclude that schools are more effective overall when they have developed successful R&S systems. Watrobka (2003) argues that the quality of schools depends on hiring outstanding teachers and supporting their success. Research findings have indicated positive relationships between the effectiveness of R&S and new teacher quality. For example, the findings of Liu and Johnson (2003) indicate that a new teacher's effectiveness in working with students depends on whether the teachers have been hired into a job that is a good fit with their expectations and talents. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that careful teacher selection has a positive effect on those appointees' job satisfaction and retention. By contrast, if the teaching position does not match the teacher's interests and preferences (e.g. grade level and school culture), it is often associated with job dissatisfaction and low retention rates. Roberts (2003: 1) summarises this point, stating:

*“Well-designed organisations cannot excel by the quality of design alone – neither praise nor pay can motivate people to perform beyond their capabilities, and the best training programme cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear. Without the basic match of people and work, it will not be possible to gain a proper return on all other investment in human resource programmes”.*

Castetter (1992, p.111-12) argues that, as competition increases, finding qualified, talented personnel to conduct the work of educational systems requires R&S processes that are extensive and aggressive, and directed toward placing and keeping a qualified and satisfied individual in every position in the system. The findings of Webster (1998) show that one of the most rapid ways to increase the quality of an educational system performance is to increase the effectiveness of teacher R&S. Writers such as Wise et al. (1987), Jensen

(1987), Renner (1985), Webb et al. (1994) and Watrobka (2003) have all highlighted the significant positive relationships between teacher R&S and student attainment.

In summary, organisations with effective R&S systems can better identify and hire employees with the right skills and motivations to succeed in their organizations. When employees are successful in their jobs, organizations benefit through increased productivity, higher quality products and services, as well as lower employee turnover (Gilliland, 1993; Terpstra, 1996; Perry and Kleiner, 2002; Roberts, 2003).

It is clear that improving the quality of teachers is a central pillar of any educational reform (Fullan, 1992). However, the desired increase in the quality of teachers cannot be achieved without matching the needs of the teaching profession and those of the teachers. Indeed, the quality of the teachers is a reflection of the quality of the R&S used for hiring them.

### **3.5 Influences of Teacher Quality on Students' Attainment**

Research has evidenced that teachers are the single most important element of any educational process and they are central to improving school performance and enhancing its effectiveness (Scheerens & Boskar, 1997; Al Busaidi & Bashir, 1997; Kyriakides et al. 2000; Muijs & Reynolds, 2000; Wright, et al. 1997; Rice, 2003). Other research has pointed to the quality of classroom teachers being the single most important variable in determining student success (Caldwell, 2004; Kyriakides et al. 2000).

Without effective teachers in the classroom, learning and progress is limited (Kyriakides, 2000). Although organizational aspects of schools provide the necessary preconditions for effective teaching, it is the quality of teacher-student interactions that principally determines student progress (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992). In this regard Rice (2003) reviewed a wide range of empirical studies that examine the impact of teacher characteristics on teacher effectiveness and she concluded that teacher effectiveness was the key to improved educational outcomes and suggested that it was primarily through the quality of teaching that effective schools make a difference. Fitzsimmons and Kerpelman

(1994) argue that any system reform effort must focus on classroom teachers because they have the greatest capacity to influence the educational change. Other studies of the effect of teachers at the classroom level have found that differences in teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in student learning, far outweighing the effects of differences in class size and heterogeneity (Wright et al., 1997; Jordan et al., 1997).

Sanders and Rivers, (1996) found that students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers consecutively have significantly lower achievement and gains in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in sequence. Thus, increasing the quality of schools means improving teacher quality in order to maximise student learning outcomes as teachers have strong positive effects on students' experiences of schooling, including their attitudes, behaviours and achievement outcomes.

To sum up, schools are held to be the centres of education and the teachers are the backbone of any teaching institution, a point underscored by BaizKhan (2000: 52) when he states:

*“An excellent school building with well furnished classrooms and stocked library, expertly developed curriculum and decentralised administration are important elements of a school, but they make little difference to improve the quality of education if teachers are not taken into account”.*

High quality teachers are unlikely to be appointed in the absence of high quality R&S practices. For this reason, the next section of this chapter examines the normative 'best practice' (Boxall & Purcell, 2003: 61) recommendations from both the practitioner and academic orientated literature.

### **3.6 Developing a Working Model for R&S Best Practice**

Shortages in different labour markets have become apparent across many countries and the 'war for talent' between organisations has allegedly increased nationally and internationally. Research has reflected these developments and studies have been conducted from the perspectives of both parties (i.e. the employer and the employee). Research has

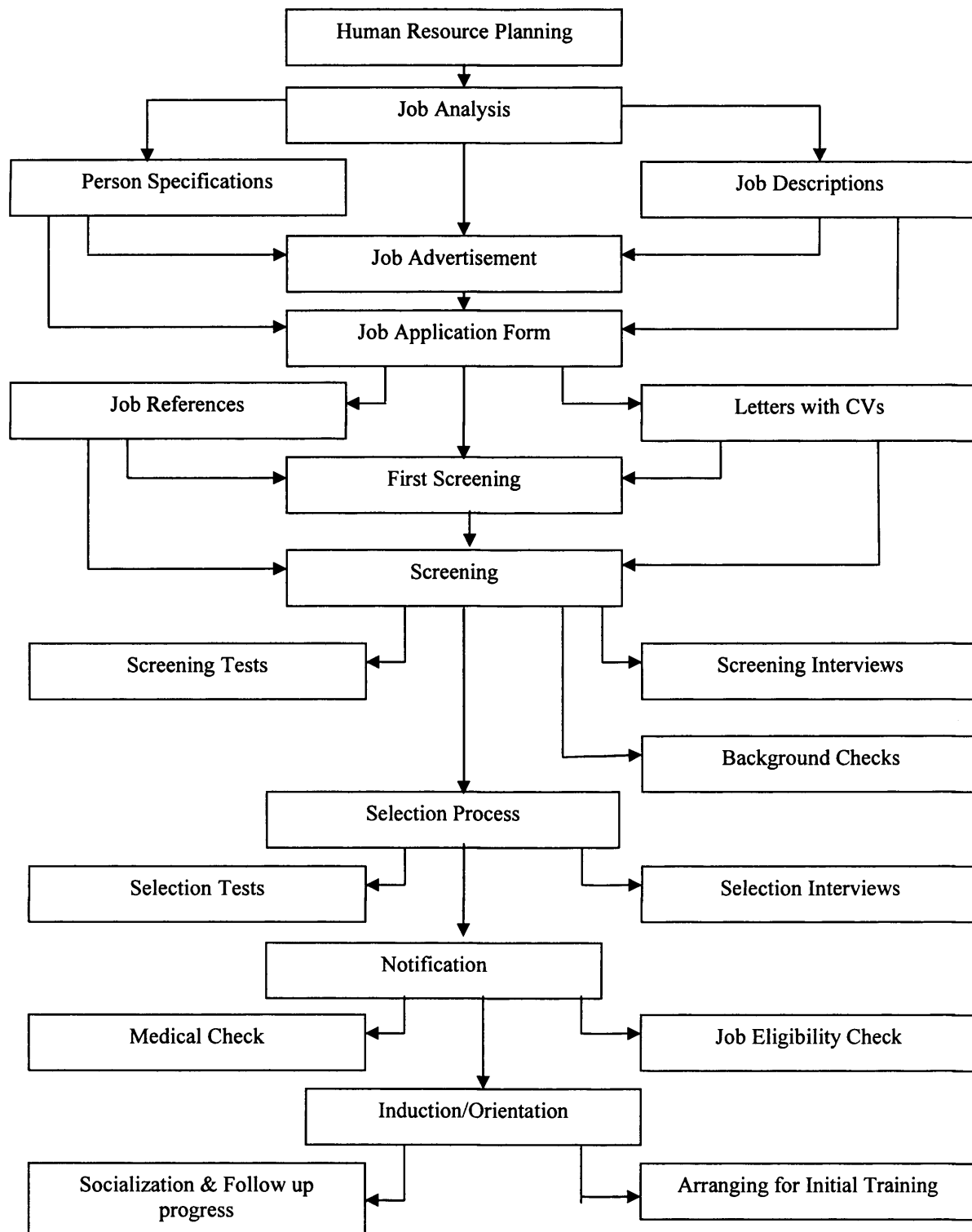
evidenced that top applicants tend to display stronger preference for organisations that offer certain characteristics (Trank et al. 2002). Effective R&S has been shown to increase organisational attractiveness (Leavitt, 1996; Trank et al, 2002) and is positively correlated to candidates' reactions to the hiring practices and their willingness to recommend the employer to others (Smither et al., 1993; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). In addition, top applicants are less likely to accept job offers from organisations whose R&S practices are perceived unfavourably (Macon & Highhouse, 1994).

Purcell and Purcell (1998) argue that the issues of attractiveness and justice are of great concern for organisations. This is because, negative views about the organisation will inhibit top people from putting themselves forward, affect their motivation, and thus their subsequent performance when they take tests or attend interviews (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, organisations with poor R&S procedures are more likely to face legal dispute from dissatisfied candidates (Smither et al., 1993). The research findings carried out by Colquitt et al. (2001) and Gilliland (1993) show that applicant perceptions about a company's R&S processes can influence other important outcomes including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover, and organizational climate.

The best practice literature categorises the standard R&S process as consisting of three major stages: recruitment, selection and orientation. Each of these stages is itself subdivided into a number of linked activities. For example, Barber (1998) identifies three elements that are included in the recruitment process: generating applicants, maintaining applicants' status and influencing job choice decision. These elements are themselves composed of particular activities (e.g. using the right methods of advertisement and conveying an accurate message). Thus, the overall R&S process can be viewed as a complex web of interdependent practices.

A preliminary analysis of the R&S literature was undertaken and a model summarising the relationship between various processes and practices found in the written accounts of best practice was constructed (see Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3. 1: A best practice model of recruitment and selection**





Although many organisations have R&S practices, which correspond with the steps contained within the generic model outlined in Figure 3.1, they differ in the emphasis they place on various elements. For example, Keenan (1995) investigated the R&S practices applied by organisations in the UK and found that all recruiters use application forms, interviews and references, and about half use assessment centres. Similar findings were reported by Clark (1992), Hodgkinson et al. (1995), and the CIPD surveys (1999, 2003).

R&S methods that assess variables directly related to the job are regarded as having higher predictive validity than those that do not. That is, the closer the selection methods are related to the job, the greater their ability to test the required knowledge, skills, and abilities and the higher the predictability of a candidate's future job performance (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987; Rioux & Bernthal, 2003). It is widely argued that all selection methods should meet a number of minimum criteria (Sparrow, 1999; Schmitt & Chan, 1998; Rynes, & Cable, 2003), including:

- Reliability (the consistency of measurement across time).
- Validity (the degree of accuracy of a test).
- Utility (the degree to which the information provided by a selection method enhances the bottom-line effectiveness of the organisation).
- Acceptability (the appropriateness of methods for a selection process).
- Generalisability (the degree to which the validity of a selection device established in one context extends to other contexts).
- Legality (selection methods are in line with country regulations and employee rights).

In the next sections, a review of the literature pertinent to the best R&S practice is presented. It is divided into three main parts; recruitment activities, selection activities and orientation activities.

### 3.7 Best Practice Merit-based R&S Methods

#### 3.7.1 Recruitment methods

Tyson and York (2000: 106) describe recruitment as:

*“The phase that immediately precedes selection. Its purpose is to pave the way for the selection procedures by producing ideally, the smallest number of candidates who appear to be capable either of performing the required tasks of the job from the outset, or developing the ability to do so within a period of time acceptable to the employing organisation”.*

This implies that recruitment is the beginning of an employment relationship, and thus the quality of people it yields for selection will affect the success of later HRM practices. In this sense, Ferris et al. (2002: 2) assert:

*“Thus, the ability of HRM practices to positively impact organizational effectiveness is rooted in the effectiveness of recruitment practices. Therefore, any HRM practices that can enhance an organization’s capacity to obtain and retain top talent will strengthen the relationship between HRM practices and organizational effectiveness”.*

According to Parry (1994), successful recruiting techniques need concrete groundwork, as the results of the selection process depend on the effectiveness of the recruitment methods in bringing forward the top potential applicants to the selection stage. And, as a result, the quality of the new employee is determined by the attractiveness of the recruitment process. In short, this approach to this reveals and satisfies the candidate’s needs while, at the same time, ensuring the hiring organisation’s needs are met as well (Barber, 1998). Ferris et al., (2002) point out that there is growing evidence suggesting that recruitment practices can play a crucial role in enhancing the organisation’s image, which in turn may influence the relationship between HRM and organisational effectiveness.

The recruitment process is commonly described as consisting of a number of related steps, the most widely cited of which are outlined below.

#### **3.7.1.1. The Establishment of R&S Policy**

The establishment of well planned and defined R&S policies can help schools to prepare for current and future requirements of education. Researchers such as Anderson (1988), Broussard, et al. (1989), Caldwell and Tymko (1990), Castetter (1992) and Hite et al. (1994) have emphasised the importance of having such policies before commencing later stages of the R&S process. These authors found that a well planned and uniform R&S policy can reassure the applicant, the community, and the school staff that competency is the key factor determining acceptance or rejection. Furthermore, the R&S policy helps to clarify the various aspects that are involved in the R&S operation such as purposes, procedures responsibilities and authorities for implementation (Anderson, & Shackleton, 1993). The policy should incorporate systemised and standardised R&S practices to collect and evaluate similar information on all applicants, and thus incorporate the principle of equality and justice (Judge et al. 2000). This implies that the policy should emphasise the use of job analysis that includes job descriptions and person specifications to be used as a basis for R&S criteria for each position (Millward, 2005). Tekeste (1996) emphasises the need to guard against unfair practices when designing the policy and thus experts ought to be involved and a professional approach should be adopted. Moreover, R&S policy must be in keeping with the Equal opportunities policy and be legally sound.

#### **3.7.1.2. Establishing R&S Objectives and Strategy Development**

A clear sense of R&S objectives should be established (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). These include the type of employee the organisation is trying to recruit; the way to find the potential employees, the timing of recruitment, and the message that should be conveyed to the job seekers (Breaugh, 1992). Without clear recruitment objectives, it is difficult to develop a sound recruitment strategy (Barber & Rynes, 1990). Traditionally organisations aimed to generate a huge number of applicants from which they could choose the best individuals. However, organisations have become more selective in their approach and often try to influence some pre-hire outcomes such as the quality of job applicants, diversity, and the number of people who are likely to accept the job offers (Williams et al.

1993). In addition, the objectives of the R&S process are often influenced by post-hire outcomes such as the expected job satisfaction of the new employees, the initial job performance and the accomplishment of the psychological contract from both parties (Rynes, 1991).

### **3.7.1.3. Centralisation/Decentralisation of R&S**

Centralisation of R&S means that administrators at the central office carry out most of the R&S activities and have the overall responsibility for placing teachers in the positions throughout the country/district (Liu & Johnson, 2003). Centralisation of R&S relies on uniform procedures that are usually based on standard job descriptions, interview practices, and/or criteria for evaluating candidates (Shivers, 1989; Wise et al. 1987). This means that teachers are hired on the basis of their general qualifications while, special aspects such as teaching characteristics (e.g. subject knowledge) and the other factors like their particular needs of local contexts (e.g., student population served, professional culture of the school) are not factored into the hiring process until the later stages, if at all. As a result, candidates may receive little information about specific positions and thus have little basis on which to evaluate the fit between their own skills, interests, and expertise and the positions that they are considering and for which they are being considered (Liu & Johnson, 2003).

In contrast, decentralisation of R&S allows organisations to design their own hiring policies that they believe perfectly fit their needs. This allows organisations such as schools to carry out their own activities and make their decisions whether the applicants meet the requirement of the vacant position and fit the culture of the school (Wise et al. 1987). A review of the literature suggests that there is a growing tendency towards increasingly decentralisation and a concomitant shift towards greater delegation of responsibility to line management. Therefore, a lot of responsibilities have been passed onto line managers including policy decisions such as employment and other activities that were traditionally held to be the sole preserve of top management (Carroll, 1991; Dobbs, 1993; Lawler, 1986; Storey, 1992; Kamoche, 1994). In practice, we are unlikely to find such a thing as a truly decentralised system and almost all decisions (e.g. finance, personnel, and curriculum) will

exhibit degrees of centralisation and decentralisation. The issue for organisations is finding the appropriate balance (Hanson, 1998). For example, the Ministry of Education may set the standards for teacher qualifications, but the actual hiring according to those standards may be carried out in the regions.

#### **3.7.1.4. Human Resource Planning**

In view of the fact that, the success of any organisation depends on the quality, commitment and performance of people who work there, effective human resource planning is essential in order to employ and retain the most talented individuals and keep them actively engaged in their work.

Parry (1994) argues that R&S is a key element of HRM and involves more than simply reacting to job vacancies. Instead, it is an activity that shapes prominently the strategic process of every organisation. She concludes that human resource planning (HRP) can help organisations to predict changes and spot trends in staffing resources. This strengthens R&S judgement by helping recruiters to choose effective hiring methods, which in turn will facilitate the selection of the right individual for the job. Taylor (1998: 60) states:

*“Human resource planning provides the information on which recruiters base their activities. It reveals what gaps there are between the demands for and supply of people with particular skills and can thus underpin decisions about whom to recruit and what methods to use in doing so. Human resource planning aims to meet the organisation future needs”.*

#### **3.7.1.5. Identifying Requirements**

The process of filling a vacancy involves gaining the best match possible between the recruitment brief or criteria and the attributes of those applying for it (CIPD, 1999; 2003). Therefore, clear criteria should be set by the organisation against which the applicant should be assessed. Heritage and Davidson (2002) have proposed a ‘PIKM’ framework: Personality; Intellect, aptitudes and abilities; Knowledge and experience; Motivation. They argue that this can be used to match the talents of applicants with the needs of the organisation.

Survey research published by the CIPD (1999) indicates that employers in the UK consider formal qualifications, relevant experience, personal qualities, technical skills and knowledge as the most important relevant skills and qualities that should match the job requirements.

The majority of best practice accounts of R&S place a high degree of emphasis on the importance of effective job analysis, job description and person specification.

#### **a. Job Analysis**

Job analysis is a systematic examination of the knowledge, skills and duties required to perform a position within an organisation (Sanchez & Levine, 2000; Roberts, 1997; Torrington & Hall, 1998). According to Bernardin and Russell (1998: 119):

*“Job analysis information that accurately reflects the requirement needed for the job can have a direct impact on the effectiveness of any recruitment and efforts”.*

Indeed, job analysis is often described as the ‘cornerstone’ of R&S (Levine & Sanchez, 2004; Schuler & Jackson, 1996; Sherman et al. 1998; Dessler et al. 1999). Siddique (2004: 2) argues that job analysis provides a rich source of information about jobs and jobholders that HR professionals use to develop such important documents as ‘job descriptions’, ‘job specifications’ and ‘performance standards. These can help to make effective HR decisions. For example; job analysis can be used for training, compensation, performance management as well as for R&S. Cascio (1998) argues that for effective HR to be achieved, jobs must be clearly understood by both the jobholders and the organisation, and that job analysis can help to provide this understanding.

In regard to R&S, job analysis can help the recruiters by providing them with guidelines on what skills, abilities and knowledge are needed to successfully carry out a particular job (Siddique, 2004). In particular, job analysis can be used to: determine the job duties included in any advertisement; fix the appropriate salary level for the post; identify the

minimum educational level required, and help design the interview questions (Robertson & Smith, 2001; Parry, 1994).

### **b. Job Descriptions**

A job description is the result of a job analysis and is a formal description of the tasks and duties inherent to a post (Levesque, 1996). The organisation should have a clear indication of the particular requirements of the job, where that job fits into the overall organisation structure, before the process of recruitment to attract suitable candidates for the particular vacancy begins. A job description should provide enough information in an appropriate language and format to be accurate, clear and useful to both the employer and the employee. Such information is a crucial aspect in providing information to applicants so that they can confirm or withdraw their application (Plachy & Plachy, 1993; Drummond, 1994; Torrington & Hall, 1998; Mullins, 1999; Maund, 2001). CIPD surveys (2000-03) have shown that almost all organisations in UK use formal job descriptions to identify the tasks and duties of a vacant position.

### **c. Person Specifications**

A person specification describes the attributes a candidate should possess to be considered suitable for the job. These attributes are usually divided into 'essential' and 'desirable/preferable' and are further categorised into skills, knowledge, experience, and attitudes (DeLon, 1994; Torrington & Hall, 1998; Mullins, 1999).

Much of the research into person specifications has focused on 'competency determination' or 'worker-orientated job analysis'. Robertson and Smith (2001) note that the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that appear in a person specification should be the result of a task analysis, but that many practitioners go directly to KSAs by asking subject-matter experts to identify the competencies required for the job. Person specifications are indeed very important elements in the R&S process as the absence of KSAs can result in errors that might lead to the selection of an unfit applicant for the job required. Alaqi (1993) indicates that with the absence of clear person specifications, there is a danger that interviewers might simply select candidates similar to themselves.

In summary, there is widespread agreement that job analysis, job description and person specification are essential elements within the R&S process, and that a complete and accurate picture of a job can help the recruiter identify the most appropriate candidates.

#### **3.7.1.6. Conveying an Effective Recruitment Message**

An effective recruitment message can increase the attractiveness of the job and the organisation. It should be constructed to yield the highest quantity of high quality applicants (Wanous, 1992). The recruitment message needs to be understandable and viewed as credible by the individuals whom the organisation is interested in recruiting (Breugh & Billings, 1988). Wanous (1992) found that those applicants who received an effective job message had lower turnover and better job performance. In addition, Rynes (1991) concluded that job characteristics described in the recruitment message have a significant impact on the reaction of job applicants to the recruitment process. It is clear that the better the information conveyed to the potential applicants about the organisation and the job, the more effective the R&S process overall (Breugh & Mann, 1984; Kirnan et al. 1989). Thus, any job advertisement needs to convey attractive, concise and true information about the organisation in order for top applicants to apply.

Connerley et al., (2003) found that advertisements that are accurately based on job descriptions can act as an effective filter. That is, they reduce the overall number of applicants, but can increase the number of suitable candidates. Mathews and Redman (1998) found that potential applicants were most strongly influenced by data relating to job tasks, salary, key responsibilities, career prospects, closing date, company details, location and experience required.

To sum up, an effective job advertisement should make as many people as possible aware of a vacancy, and persuade the maximum number of suitable people to apply.



### **3.7.1.7. Advertisement Methods**

Mullins (1999) argues that it is vital for recruiters to know where suitable applicants are to be found, and how best to make contact with them. This requires consideration of the channels available for communication (written media, external agencies, education liaison, professional contacts, direct mail, billboards and cinema) and the most cost effective way of using these methods. Surveys by Industrial relation services (IRS) (2002) and CIPD, (2003) all report that the traditional press advertisement remains the single most popular method used across all sectors in the UK. These surveys also report a growth in the online advertising, especially in high-demand and international markets.

### **3.7.1.8. Application Forms**

Application forms are used during R&S by approximately 95% of UK organisations (Tixier, 1996; CIPD, 2000-04). Schuler (1987: 179) defines the application form as: “...*seeking information about the applicant’s background and present status*”. It should help employers to make a direct comparison between candidates on the same issues. The design of the form allows an organisation to set its own agenda in key areas of importance and to assess the ability of applicants to express themselves in a concise and straightforward manner (Schmitt & Chan, 1998). Strebler (2000: 9) recommends that application forms include questions about educational and professional qualifications, present and previous appointments, job related knowledge, experience and training, skill-related information, and career objectives and other achievements. Clement (2000: 21) argues that the application forms for teachers should gather information about years of experience; teaching references, and extracurricular interests.

### **3.7.1.9. Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

A standard CV presents all the key qualifications, skills and experience in a well-presented, easy-to-read format. The potential employer should be able to obtain all the information they are looking for about whether the applicant would be appropriate for the advertised position: their education and work background and whether they have any relevant

experience (Clement, 2000; Messmer, 2000). However, Torrington & Hall (1998: 227) show three major weaknesses with the CV as a R&S device: i) candidates giving the information in a different order; ii) good candidates omitting important information, and; iii) CVs written by professional agencies. In addition, candidates may deliberately attempt to deceive reviewers by elaborating their qualifications and relevant experiences.

#### **3.7.1.10. Job References**

The role of the referee is to provide recruiters with their opinion of the candidate and is a traditional way to finding out what others think of the applicant (Cook, 1999). In the field of education, the reference letter continues to be a valued resource in the teacher recruitment process. In fact, an applicant's letters of reference are considered by many teacher recruiters to be the crucial information link between the likely employer and those who are most familiar with the applicant's training and qualifications for the position (Peters & Bedoya, 1995). For this reason, letters of reference are often considered more importance and are given more attention than other source of information (Mortalini, 1974; Nash, 1986; Natter & Kuder, 1983). However, reference letters also have a number of weaknesses. Research findings indicate that they are often unreliable; do not provide the recruiter with the correct information; and frequently fail to reflect the actual skills and abilities of the candidate (Armstrong, 1996; Cook, 1999). Thus, although widely used in the R&S of teachers, references need to be treated with a degree of caution.

#### **3.7.2. Selection Methods**

The selection process is the key activity wherein decisions are made about which personnel will fill positions that become vacant. Middlewood and Lumby (1998: 61) describe selection as the process in which candidates are assessed and examined for their suitability for a certain type of job according to selection criteria set by the organization. In addition, Good (1973: 17) defines personnel selection as:

*"The process of assessing candidates for teaching positions and non-professional employment; handled by either the central office administration or by selection committees, of which the school principal is often a member, frequently with staff participation in evaluation of professional candidates".*

Gatewood and Field (1994) highlight the importance of the selection process, indicating that it is performed under legal and environmental constraints to protect the future of the organisation and the individuals, as mistakes can prove costly. Although a wide variety of selection devices such as assessment centres, bio-data and selection tests are available to organisations, the discussion here is limited to an examination of those techniques currently used in the selection of teachers in Oman. This is not to say that other approaches lack merit, just that they are less pertinent to the findings of this study.

### **3.7.2. 1. Screening**

To employ effective screening practices, an organisation must know what information is required, how to gain it, and what to do with it once it is gathered. This can be done by investigating issues that are related to the applicant's working and personal life either by using objective pre-employment interview or by conducting pre-employment tests (Edwards & Kleiner, 2002). The information gathered may include biographical data, employment history including discipline, educational history including certification, position specific skills, knowledge, abilities and experience, organisation and departmental interests, integrity and requirements and relocation attitude and commitment (Slowik, 2001; Torrington & Hall, 1998; Roberts, 2003).

### **3.7.2. 2. Applicant Notification**

Research indicates that sending letters inviting applicants for interview has positive consequences for selection outcomes. Job applicants feel valued by the organisation and are encouraged to continue with the application process (Wise et al. 1987). In addition, sending notification letters to unsuccessful applicants makes those individuals feel that their application has been taken seriously and makes them more likely to apply again in future or recommend other to the organisation (Smither et al., 1993). Research has shown that

conveying good image of the selection process can positively enhance applicants' attitudes toward the company, for example; decisions to stay in the selection process, job offer acceptance, willingness to recommend the organisation to others seeking jobs, and willingness to apply for another job with the organisation (Gilliland & Steiner, 1999; Gilliland et al., 2001; Madigan & Macon, 2005).

### **3.7.2. 3. Selection Interview**

Grummit (1985: 1) defines an interview as: *"a meeting of persons for discussion where there is an explicit objective to the conversation, and where one party is responsible for achieving that objective"*. Therefore, the selection interview is a selection procedure designed to predict future job performance on the basis of the applicant's responses to oral inquiries (McDaniel et al., 1994). A review of literature shows that interviews are the most frequently used method in the personnel selection process (Arvey, 1979; Martin & Nagao, 1989; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Rynes, 1993; Shackleton & Newell, 1997; CIPD, 2000; 2003). It is the opinion of many commentators that their use is unavoidable, as Graham and Bennet (1998: 225) put it:

*"The selection interview is an extension and development of the inevitable meeting which takes place between an employer and a prospective employee. It includes questions designed to test achievement or aptitude, and is at present the most commonly used method for personality assessment"*.

Not surprisingly, the selection interview is the most common tool used by schools when hiring new teachers (Jensen, 1987; Westbrook, 1998). Braun et al. (1987) found that successful applicants and school administrators both viewed the interview as the most important element within the overall R&S process and similar results were found by Vornberg and Liles (1983), Cohen and Gump (1984) and Watrobka (2003). There is a widespread belief that interviews are an efficient way of measuring the teacher characteristics considered crucial for teacher effectiveness:

*It is the most effective method of observing such characteristics as poise, enunciation, phrasing, posture, and facial expression, manner of dress, cleanliness and mannerisms. These aspects of the interviewee are important indicators of his or her ability to communicate with students and personnel interview is the best method to view these characteristics". Emley and Ebmeier (1997: 41)*

Schmitt and Chan (1998) point out that hundreds of studies have been carried out into selection interviews to assess their reliability and validity. Researchers agree that the selection interview has the potential to accurately predict future performance, but only where best practice is adopted (Arvey & Campion, 1982; McDaniel et al. 1994). However, selection interviews can do more than just select the best applicant for an organisation, they can play a role in fostering a positive image of the organisation (Dipboye, 1992; Barber, 1998; Berkson et al. 1999), which in turn may influence the applicant's decision to proceed or withdraw from the R&S process (Cable & Turban, 2001; Rynes, 1991; Gilliland, 1993).

In summary, the selection interview appears to serve three main purposes: i) obtaining information from job candidates sufficient to enhance the likelihood of making the right selection decision; ii) presenting the right information to the job applicants in order to inform their decision to continue with the application process or withdraw their application and iii) increasing the attractiveness of the organisation to the candidate.

#### **a. Structuring the R&S Interview**

Structuring a selection interview has been shown to enhance the reliability and validity of selection decisions (Barclay, 1999; Judge et al., 2000). Robertson and Smith (2001: 456) state:

*"Probably the most consistent findings are that interviews are improved by using a structure. Typical correlated validity coefficients quoted by Salgado (1999), are 0.56 for highly structured interviews and 0.20 for interviews with very little predetermined structure".*

The findings of Conway et al. (1995) and Diploye (1997) illustrate that structured interviews tend to have a higher inter-rater reliability (0.67) than unstructured interviews

(0.34). In addition, the work of Campion et al. (1997) indicates that the various factors associated with structured interviews can positively influence the interview's psychometric properties, legal defensibility, and applicant/interviewer reactions.

There are two main ways of structuring an interview. These are situational interviewing and behaviour description interviewing. Situational interviews, in which candidates are asked to describe how they would respond to typical and relevant work situations, tend to have a somewhat higher predictive validity than do other interview techniques. Similarly, assessment of candidates performing actual (or simulated) job behaviours can enhance the predictive validity of selection decisions; behaviour-based measures result in highest validities (Ferris et al. 2002). Furthermore, Salgado (1999) found that past-oriented interview questions have a higher validity (0.51) than future oriented questions. Torrington and Hall (1998: 271) list six advantages of structured R&S interviews over other types of employment interviews. These are:

- The candidate expects the proceeding to be decided and controlled by the interviewer and will anticipate a structure within which to operate.
- It helps the interviewer to make sure that they cover all relevant areas and avoid irrelevant ones
- It looks professional. Structure can be used to guide the interview and make it logical
- It assists the interviewer in using the time available in the most effective way
- It can be used as a memory aid when making notes directly after the interview
- It can make it easier to compare candidates

#### **b. Types of Interview Questions**

The best practice literature suggests that interview questions should be based on job analysis, job descriptions and person specifications. The questions should be prepared beforehand and they should represent knowledge, skills, and characteristics of the job requirements of the teaching position (Watrobka, 2003). According to Deems (1985) the

selection of the best candidates requires an organised format of questions that include rapport building questions, open ended questions, trick questions, probing questions, and non-question questions and the most effective interview will include questions from each category.

Although the content of the interview questions should vary according to the type of job to be filled, there are some common categories of job questions cited in the normative literature. These include questions about job qualifications, previous work experience, job-related interests and career goals. As well as factual and cognitive ability questions that require interviewees to break down information into smaller parts and consider how these relate to the whole. Interview questions may attempt to measure aptitudes, abilities, skills and experience, stress tolerance, motivation for work, tenacity, resilience, enthusiasm, planning and organisation skills, judgement, management of subordinates, problem analysis, decisiveness, financial and analytical ability, and integrity. There are also questions that require the interviewee to take their existing knowledge and create something new. Candidates may be asked to write a story, draw a picture, make a model, think of an idea, or predict outcomes. Other questions may attempt to evaluate listening skills, oral communication and presentation skills, written communication skills, adaptability, work standards, risk taking, initiative, independence, creativity, energy, ability and willingness to work in team, or without supervision (Clement, 2000; Ober, 1992; Pawlas, 1995; Perry & Kleiner, 2002).

The goal of the series of interview questions is to give the interviewer solid evidence on which to base a hiring decision. According to Castetter (1981) and Pawlas (1995) these should 'when interviewing teachers' focus on four areas: the teacher as a person, what the teacher has done in the past, what the teacher will do for the school in the future, and how the teacher will fit in the school.

### **C. Best Practice Guidelines for Conducting Interviews**

Research evidence (Wanger, 1949; Ulrich and Trumbo, 1965; Schmitt, 1976; Arvey & Campion, 1982; McDaniel et al. 1994; McDaniel et al. 1994; Graves & Karren, 1996; Schmitt & Chan, 1998; Salgado, 1999; Moscoso, 2000) shows that the reliability and validity of selection interviews can be significantly increased by adopting a number of prescriptive guidelines as follows: i) interview questions should be based on the findings of a job analysis and be demonstrably job related; ii) the interview should be structured and the same questions be asked of all applicants; iii) the interviewers should use rating scales that specify the nature of 'good' and 'bad' answers for each question; iv) interviewers should be provided with training that specifies how the interview is to be conducted, provide practice and feedback with respect to the conduct of the interview, and records common forms of interviewer errors; v) should use multiple independent interviewers whose judgments are systematically combined; vi) should monitor the effectiveness of the interviews by collecting data on the job performance, job satisfaction, and retention of new employees.

#### **D. Conducting Selection Interviews**

The key point of an interview is to exchange information so that both parties can make an informed decision. For this reason, creating a supportive social and expressive climate is essential for success (Graham & Bennett, 1998). An effective job interview, according to Goldstein (1977), should involve tactics designed to draw explicit answers from candidates, and like teaching a lesson, should move from the known to the unknown, and from the simple to the complex.

Thus, to conduct a successful interview, the interviewer needs to have both a strategy and tactics for encouraging people to talk, express their feelings and explore their experience and motivations (Clement, 2000).

#### **E. Limitations of Selection Interviews**

Goodworth (1979) as cited in Miller et al (1992: 7) argues that there is often:



*“Unquestioning faith in interviewing as a tradition...despite a volume of evidence over many years that interview judgements are often inadequate, biased and always highly subjective”.*

Middlewood and Lumby (1998, p.67) argue that the poor predictive validity of many interviews can be attributed to basing judgements upon intuition rather than facts, making snap judgement, insisting on personal stereotypes of what a ‘good’ candidate is, comparing candidates with the previous post-holder or with other candidates rather than the agreed person specification, and assessing candidates against the interviewer’s favourable self image.

Research by Thayer (1978), Arvey and Faley (1988) and Dipboye (2001) has shown that the limitations of interviews in the selection process is derived from the way in which interviewers conduct the interviews and is not inherent within the interview as a method of selection. Campion et al. (1988) and Pulakos and Schmitt (1995) argue that, with these improvements, the interview has the potential to be a highly effective selection tool. The question therefore does not seem to be whether or not employment interviews should be utilised, but how to improve their use.

#### **F. The Effects of Applicant’s Personal Characteristics**

The applicant’s personal characteristics can have an effect on their performance in the selection interview process and thus can affect the outcome of the interview (Barrick and Mount, 1991: 213). In relation to teacher selection, research findings indicate that selection decisions can be influenced by the personal characteristics of the teacher such as presentation style, chronological age, physical appearance, similarity to the interviewer and gender (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998). Other research suggests that the applicant’s personality can influence the results of selection interviews in at least two ways: through direct evaluation of the applicant’s personality by the interviewer during the interview, and; by its influence on a number of behaviours that occur prior to the interview but which are related to interview success (Pingatore et al. 1994). In employment interviews, studies of applicants’ nonverbal behaviours generally show that positive behaviours, such as smiling and direct eye contact, are associated with higher evaluations by interviewers, and negative

behaviours, such as frowning and avoidance gazes, are associated with lower evaluations (Dipboye, 1992; Newman & Uleman, 1989; Forbes & Jackson, 1980). Thus, it is probably correct that interviewers may use their own assessments of personality when predicting how well the applicant will do in a given position (Gifford & Wilkinson, 1985; Howard & Ferris, 1996). Other studies show that interviewers' judgments are influenced by physical and demographic characteristics, many of which are unrelated to job performance (Heilman & Saruwatari, 1979; Raza & Carpenter, 1987; Roehling et al. 1999). These biases are especially strong for perceptions of physical attractiveness. Physically attractive people are consistently perceived as more intelligent, socially skilled, dominant, and mentally healthy than are physically unattractive people are generally preferred in personnel decisions (Cann, et al. 1981; Gilmore et al. 1986; Marlowe et al. 1996).

#### **3.7.2.4. Interviewer Training**

Applicants' positive perceptions of the employment interview can positively influence post-hire outcomes such as job satisfaction, initial job performance, perceptions about psychological contract violation and first year retention rate (Smither et al. 1993; Breugh & Starke, 2000). Thus, effective interviewing requires interviewers to convey an accurate message of what the job entails and at the same time to have insights into the job candidates' capabilities, knowledge and skills (Wanous, 1992).

Additionally, interviewers who have received systematic training tend to make more valid and reliable selection decisions. Researchers recommend the use of multiple trained raters to evaluate candidates as a method of reducing the effects of individual perceptual bias (Wiesner, 1988; Hyde, 1997; Huffcutt & Woehr, 1999).

Rynes (1991) found that those who conduct the interviews are viewed by applicants as representing the organisation and that applicants base their perceptions about the job and the organizations on the characteristics of the interviewer. Other work by Schemit and Coyle (1976) and Harris, (1989) found a positive relationship between interviewer training and the effectiveness of the overall outcomes of the R&S process.

It is apparent that trained interviewers are much more effective and productive in identifying qualified applicants and represent the organisation in a way that tends to send positive messages to all candidates, even those who are unsuccessful.

#### **3.7.2.5. The Use of Realistic Job Preview (RJP)**

The incorporation of RJP into the R&S process is at odds with the traditional approach of emphasising the positive aspects of the organisation. It has nevertheless been shown to result in employees who are better adjusted to the work environment when compared with those recruited without using this procedure (Wanous, 1973). In addition, the incorporation of RJP in the selection process appears to have a positive effect on the formation of employees' psychological contracts (Rosseau, 1995; Wanous, 1992). For example, if the employee has no choice apart from accepting the job offer, though they receive undesirable information about the job, the candidate should not feel that the organisation has not accomplished its side of the psychological contract if the employer has conveyed accurate information about the position during the R&S process (Wanous, 1992).

In addition, providing recruiters with RJP helps them to be more likely to make valid selection decisions when they have a clear understanding of job expectations and qualifications. Besides, inter-rater reliability and validity of selection decisions is enhanced if raters/interviewers have a common understanding and use of appropriate evidence for job expectations. Moreover, collecting a greater quantity of job-relevant information will tend to reduce perceptual biases regarding candidate characteristics (e.g. age, race, sex, attractiveness) ((Wanous, 1991, 2003).

#### **3.7.3 Teacher Orientation**

Attracting the best-qualified people and selecting the most appropriate ones from the pool of applicants is often seen as the end-point of R&S. However, recruitment goes beyond this stage as retaining those personnel is considered to be an integral part of the R&S process (Roberts, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wise et al. 1987). Indeed, even after the

placement of the new teachers in their schools both employer and employee continue to make choices either to continue with, or withdraw from, the employment contract.

Thus, R&S is not only concerned with attracting applicants and subsequently selecting the most appropriate ones from the pool but is also concerned with meeting new teachers' needs in order to encourage them to remain in the teaching profession once they are hired. Indeed, research has shown that the teaching profession has one of the highest dropout rates (Schlechy, 1985; Perez, et al., 1997).

It is apparent that newly appointed teachers face a lot of difficulties adjusting to their chosen profession. New teachers are often worried about their ability to cope with the demands of the job. This includes discipline and classroom management, parents and the community, administration, teaching strategies, colleagues, motivating students, materials and supplies, and assessment (Johnston, 1985; Veenman, 1984). Other difficulties are the feelings of isolation, reality/culture shock, and the confusion of self-understanding (Johnston, 1985). It appears that new teachers face fear, insecurity and anxiety as illustrated by Geua-May (1994: 340) who asserts:

*"The novice teacher feels that her performance and personality are subject to constant appraisal by students, colleagues and supervisors. She spends a lot of time and energy defending and denying feelings of anger, frustration, disappointment and helplessness, or coping with the environment rather than developing techniques for effective and interesting teaching. She faces methodological and procedural problems."*

Therefore, new employees including teachers need a formal orientation scheme that introduces them to the organisation, prepares them for their responsibilities and gives them support and advice. It includes the whole process that enables new teachers to settle into their school and become confident in their teaching (Veenman, 1984; Gordon, 1991; Bolam, 1982; Clement, 2000). Well-designed orientation programmes appear to be one solution to retaining quality teachers. Orientation programmes provide new teachers with a sense of support and commitment. They focus on new teachers' needs and ensure they become part of the learning community, with a solid understanding of district and school

goals, mission and culture (Henry, 1988; Odell and Ferraro, 1992). Wood (1999) argues that it would be great waste of time, effort and money to go to a great deal of trouble to select the right personnel only to lose much of that investment through failure to orient the new teacher. Without proper induction, the quality of performance of the teacher is severely impaired.

The findings of research carried out in the Omani context indicate that the programmes of instruction in the teacher training colleges focus on educational theory and that students receive inadequate practical teaching experience (Al Salmi, 1994; Al Tobi, 2002). As a result, new teachers are often faced with problems that they did not anticipate and which challenge their experience and corrode their enthusiasm. As Zahorik (1986: 12) suggests:

*“Novice teachers experience a reality shock in their first year especially when faced with the demands of teaching practice and with the gap between their ideals and the reality of everyday school life”.*

Thus, it is vital to provide new teachers with well-designed and well-implemented orientation programmes that put great emphasis on assisting them in developing their problem-solving capacity and enhancing their teaching confidence. Fullan (1991) and Koetsier and Wabbels (1995) summarise the anticipated benefits of successful teacher orientation as:

- Making teachers feel welcome and secure,
- Helping new teachers become members of the staff team,
- Inspiring teachers towards excellence in performance,
- Helping teachers adjust to their work environment,
- Acquainting the new teacher with other employees
- Helping new teachers in the areas of role definition, interpersonal communication, class management, teaching strategies and adjusting to the school system.
- Making the teaching profession more attractive to potential recruits.
- Transmitting organisational culture.

- Providing new teachers with information about the community, school system, staff and students.
- Reducing teacher dropout rates

In summary, providing good orientation to the newly-hired teacher not only helps to effectively integrate that person into the workplace but also helps to make them feel welcome and provide them with information about how to cope with the demands of the workplace. Therefore, orientation courses must be organised to facilitate the new teacher's entry into the profession. Indeed, research findings confirm that schools that provide effective orientation and high levels of support for beginning teachers retain more of them (Goodwin, 1999; Grant, 2001).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter presents a review of the normative 'best practice' literature and summarises both theoretical and empirical findings associated with the various techniques and approaches. The richness of the R&S research in the UK, and the USA, as well as other developed countries, provides an evidence informed framework (Tranfield et al. 2003) within which to understand the teacher R&S practices found in Oman.

The debates and discussions identified in this chapter informed the research purposes, questions and methodology discussed in Chapter four. They also provided a conceptual context for the analysis and interpretation of research data reported in later chapters.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the overall research design and the data collection methods employed. Research design refers to the plan or blueprint of the study (Babbie, 2001; Fouche, 2002; Huysamen, 1993). The methodology entails the philosophy of the research process which includes a series of systematic and coherent explanations for the decisions taken about data gathering and analysis (Oswick, 1998) as well as the justifications for using certain methods (Blaikie, 2002). Therefore, the next sections will highlight the development of the processes, techniques and procedures used to gather empirical evidence for current models and practices relating to the R&S of teachers in Oman in order to draw general conclusions about the effectiveness of these models and practices as perceived by the stakeholders. In addition, the data collection approach, sampling, instruments and the structure of the analysis will be outlined.

Accordingly, this chapter is sub-divided into the following sections:

- Conceptual context
- Research purposes and Research questions
- Research Tools
- Validity and Reliability
- Data Analysis

### **4.2 Conceptual Context of the Research**

According to Maxwell (1998), the conceptual context of a research study refers to the concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and inform the research. However, Jones (2002: 51) argues that conceptual context is more than that; it is a process which incorporates many of the characteristics of sense-making identified by Weick (1995: 15) that is: *“to engage in sense-making is to construct, filter, frame, create*

*facticity, and render the subjective into something more tangible”.*

Several sources contributed to the conceptual context of this research. These included; a review of theoretical and empirical work carried in the field of study; primary interviews with top officials from related organisations; the experience and personal observations of the researcher and documents related to these sources.

#### **4.2.1 Literature Review**

In Oman, there is a paucity of literature relating to teacher R&S. However, the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 enabled the researcher to gain a broader understanding of the concept of R&S; its aims, procedures and innovations. It has highlighted a number of factors that have informed the design of the research questions as well as the construction of a theoretical and analytical framework (Bell, 1999). In particular, this review identified a number of pertinent issues:

First, the central concern of much R&S research has focused on how an organization can effectively select the best candidate from a large pool of candidates. However, recent research has shifted to focus on how applicants select the job and the organisation they wish to work in (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Wanous, 1992). This research revolution appears to have been driven by a shortage of skilled employees and the increasing competition between employers to recruit the best talent (Trank et al. 2002). There is also a growing interest in how to increase employee diversity in schools by attracting teachers from minority groups (Cox, 1993; Jackson et al. 1992). These issues have led to investigations into the factors that make organisations appear more attractive and what practices influence such attractiveness and thereby attract not only top applicants but also qualified minority group members to organisations (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). However, to date few studies have considered these factors from the perspective of the applicants (Rynes, 1993; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000).

Second, empirical studies have provided evidence that schools which have successful R&S systems exhibit higher performance outcomes than those schools with less successful R&S



systems (Wise et al. 1987; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Liu & Johnson, 2003; Watrobka, 2003). In fact, there is a general consensus that hiring high quality teachers is a critical element in any successful attempt to improve a given educational system. A point made forcefully by Fullan (1992: 12): *“nothing is more central to reform than the selection and development of teachers.”*

Third, the standard or ‘best practice’ approach to teacher R&S incorporates a number of well-documented stages. These include: recruitment activities (HR planning and job analysis, recruitment sources, e.g. advertisements, agencies, word of mouth, the internet, job fair); pre-selection activities (short-listing by checking references, resumes or pre-selection interviews); selection activities (interviews, tests, bio-data, assessment centres) and orientation activities (Wise, et al. 19987; Parry, 1994; CIPD, 1999-2004; Barber, 1998; Torrington & Hall, 1998; Peterson, 2002; Roberts, 2003). It is widely accepted that R&S is a conjunctive process, that is, one in which each stage is linked and overall success relies upon the successful completion of all the elements (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). This means that any deficiency in any stage will negatively affect the outcome of the whole process. For example, a misleading job description or unrealistic job preview can have negative consequences for all of the following stages of the R&S process and go beyond that to affect the new employee’s job performance (Wanous, 1992).

Fourth, although traditional methods of R&S (application forms, letters of reference and interviews) are used extensively in hiring teachers, research evidence indicates that they have poor predictive validity and often contribute relatively little to the effectiveness of the R&S process (Guion, 1998; Stewart & Cash, 1974). However, the more the selection interview is structured, the better the results in terms of reliability and validity (Campion & Campion, 1994; Dipboye, 1994; Barclay, 2001).

Fifth, R&S methods must conform to the country’s legislation and the principle of equality. Unfair treatment or direct or indirect discrimination during R&S process can have an adverse impact on the employer due to breaches of both psychological and legal contracts

(Gilliland, 1993; Wanous, 1992; Truxillo et al., 2004; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000).

Finally, job orientation is considered a crucial factor that can enhance the outcomes of the R&S process (Roberts, 2003; Schmidt & Gilliland, 1992). Carefully designed orientation programmes can help the new employee to settle in and quickly become productive. It can also help to improve job satisfaction and increase the likelihood of employee retention (Wanous and Reichers, 2000; Zahorik, 1986; Bolam, 1982).

#### **4.2.2 The Personal Experience of the Researcher**

Maxwell (2005) indicates that the personal interest of researchers in a given issue is a powerful trigger for launching research. During his work in the field of education for more than twelve years as a teacher, deputy head teacher and head teacher, the researcher has had the opportunity of observing the outcomes of teacher R&S in Oman before and during the era of the new educational reform. He has seen teachers entering the profession who appear to have little interest in teaching and exhibited little evidence of job commitment or organisational loyalty. When, he became a head teacher, the researcher had direct experience of individuals appointed to posts that were unable to teach competently and were eventually dismissed. He has observed highly motivated novice teachers left to 'sink or swim' and who, as a result, had their self-confidence destroyed or became progressively disengaged. Indeed, the researcher had a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the processes involved in the hiring of new teachers. He began to question the effectiveness of current practices in discriminating between candidates on the basis of their ability and motivation.

In the early stages as well as throughout the research process, the researcher was involved in reading official documents and reports about R&S in Oman. These documents gave him a broad insight into the current situation and he became increasingly convinced that the current teacher R&S systems were not meeting the needs of Oman's educational reforms. Furthermore, no one had studied this topic in the Omani context to the best of the researcher's knowledge, and thus this research project had the potential to make a significant contribution to practice in this field.

### **4.3 Research Purposes and Research Questions**

Maxwell (1998; 2005) identifies three major types of purposes for launching a study: research purposes, practical purposes and personal purposes. Research purposes represent the reasons for wanting to understand phenomena and may include gaining insights, developing theory, interpreting the actions of individuals and modelling interactions. Practical purposes are concerned with accomplishing a goal through meeting a need or changing a situation (Jones, 2002) and are often concerned with making social change based on what the researcher believes is desirable. Personal purposes are the private reasons that derive from the researcher's personal experience, comfort level, familiarity, habits and identity. Thus, research purposes can be summarised as the reasons why a researcher wants to do the study, what would be achieved from conducting such a study and what contribution or alteration the study would provide to the field being researched (Jones, 2002).

This research aims at investigating the current R&S practices employed in Oman in hiring primary and secondary schools teachers. This comprises the analysis and description of the perceptions and views of teachers and various stakeholders as well as the practices and activities detailed in official documents. The study also aims to provide information on the current state of teacher R&S and to make a contribution to the theoretical literature which can be used to make recommendations for improving the R&S practices and policies.

To achieve these aims, the following questions have been posited for exploration:

1. What are the R&S practices used to hire new teachers for Oman's public schools?
2. To what extent do these practices correspond with the best practices recommended in the published literature?
3. How do various stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of teacher R&S?
4. To what extent do the perceptions of the different stakeholders correspond with each other?
5. How can teacher R&S in Oman be improved?

#### 4.4 Methodological Approach

Methodology is a set of practices, procedures, and techniques designed to find answers to a research questions and to confirm hypotheses. Various methodological approaches have been discussed in the related literature e.g. experimental, survey and ethnographical approaches. However, Oswick (1998: 100) argues that most of these approaches fail to offer comprehensive insights into the range of alternatives available. Other formative classifications are offered by Green et al. (1988) cited by Oswick (1998: 100), which place emphasis on the way data is gathered. This includes:

- Gathering from secondary sources
- Gathering from respondents
- Gathering from experiments
- Gathering from simulation by modelling

The research in this study is primarily based on a survey approach defined by Johnson (1994: 13) as:

*“...a technique of collecting information from a sample of the population, usually by personal interviews, self-completed questionnaires or diaries...”*

In this study, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are the two tools representing the survey approach. These two tools are representative of the two widely discussed paradigms in the literature: the scientific paradigm and the interpretive paradigm or the positivist and the interpretive respectively (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Johnson, 1994 and Cohen & Manion, 1994). Burns (2000) calls these two paradigms the scientific empirical tradition and the naturalistic phenomenological tradition. These two approaches are also known as quantitative and qualitative research methods respectively, (Johnson, 1994; Blaxter et al., 1996; Cohen and Manion, 1994 and Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

However, decisions about which kind of research method to use may also be based on the researcher's own experience and preference, the population being researched, the proposed audience for the findings, time, money, and other resources available (Maxwell, 1998; Bell, 1999). King (1987) supports this view when he argues that there is no best method and that

the suitability of research methodology for the research purpose should predominate. Supsford and Jupp (1996: 119) emphasise this view by stating:

*“Whichever method of data collection is chosen, attention must be paid to the objectives of the research. The methods adopted must be evaluated in this light”.*

A survey approach was adopted as the most suitable method for this thesis as it was deemed to be congruent with both the research context and the explicit aims of the research.

#### **4.4.1 Triangulation of Methods**

Triangulation is defined by Cohen and Manion, (1994: 233) as “...*the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of known behaviour.*” Denzin (1978: 28) recommends triangulation because:

*“No single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors. ...because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observation must be employed...”*

According to Maxwell (1998: 88-89), the purpose of triangulation is to reduce the risk that the conclusion will reflect the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method and thereby allow the researcher to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanation that is developed. Although, triangulation has the drawback of validity regarding the match between the research design and the data generated (Oswick, 1998), its use is highly recommended in the research literature. Cohen and Manion (1994: 233) point out that triangular techniques explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data more reliable results can be expected. Furthermore, McNeil, (1992: 7), states that:

*“It has become perfectly acceptable to use a wide variety of research techniques in one study, and to use different techniques for the study of different topics. Among academic, there is continued interest in using a diversity of methods”.*

Denzin (1978: 60) identifies four basic types of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation- the use of a variety of data sources in a study. According to Oswick (1998: 108), data triangulation encompasses (1) time triangulation; exploring temporal influences by longitudinal and cross-sectional design; (2) space triangulation; taking the form of comparative research; and (3) person triangulation; variously at the individual level, the group level and the collective level.
2. Investigator triangulation- the use of several different evaluators or social scientists;
3. Theory triangulation- the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.
4. Methodological triangulation- the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires and documents.

The forms of triangulation employed in this thesis include; data triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. The sources of data include: documents, the written and spoken accounts of teachers, head teachers, and recruiters. In addition, a range of data collecting tools were utilised including questionnaires and interviews. Multiple perspectives were developed to interpret the results.

## **4.5 Research Tools**

In this study, in addition to analysing the available documents, the researcher used questionnaires and interviews to gather in-depth data from participants, and gain an insight into their experiences and perceptions of the R&S practices utilised by the Ministry of Education in hiring new teachers.

### **4.5.1 Documentary Analysis**

Documentary analysis is a research method used to examine, analyse and make inferences about documentary information (Anderson, 1997). It refers to systematic description of the

content of the documents (Freankel & Wallen, 1990). Because of this, it is generally regarded as content analysis (Anderson, 1997). Documentary analysis has been used in social science research as a specific method of investigation which offers itself as an alternative to questionnaires, interviews or observation, and is an essential part of any investigation to set up a research project (Denscombe, 1999). However, documentary analysis is not commonly used on its own to carry out a social science research project unlike questionnaires or interviews (Johnson, 1994). On the other hand, there is little confusion about the role of documentary analysis in social science research as a tool for crosschecking or validating data derived from other techniques, or as a basis for formulating hypotheses (Cohen et al. 2000).

Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994), Punch (1998) and Padgett (1998) point out that documents are a rich source of data for research. They can provide valuable information either historically or contemporarily. Data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations and they are good source for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated (Merriam, 1998). Documentary analysis involves counting concepts, words or occurrences in documents and presenting them in tabular forms (Freankel & Wallen, 1990). In this respect, Robson (1993: 187) argues that documents:

*“...may sometimes speak louder than a response to an interview questions, or tell us about something we were not in a position to observe”.*

Furthermore, documentary analysis is a non-reactive research process. This means that documents are not affected by the researcher because they were not produced for or by the researcher (Robson, 1993).

For these reasons, it was considered important to analyse the available documents to better understand the current R&S practices. In addition, documentary analysis informed the design of the survey questionnaire as well as the interview questions. Documentary analysis

was also used to compare the current R&S applied in Oman with best practices described in the related literature. Documents were also used to verify the findings obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews and thus the information obtained is combined with the evidence provided by other research methods.

Sampling strategy: According to Bell (1999), the type of documents to be gathered depends on the research questions. In this research, interest focussed upon written documents on R&S guidance and policy. Documents were gathered in two stages. The first stage was prior to the field work, and involved the collection of papers relating to current teacher R&S process and the activities involved. The second stage was after the field work, and involved the collection of data relating to Oman's Civil Service Law (1981) and Oman's Basic Law (1996).

#### **4.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used as part of the research methods in order to understand the current teacher R&S from different angles and thus improve the validity and the reliability of the research findings. Researchers define an interview as a face-to-face situation in which the researcher orally solicits responses from subjects (Powney and Watts, 1987; Cohen et al., 2000; Keats, 1994). Hence, an interview represents an interaction between three elements; the interviewer, the interviewee and the context of the interview including the questions and problems raised in the interview. Thus, it is a joint product of what interviewees and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other, (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Cohen et al, 2000).

The interview has a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. Authors categorise the most common types of interviews under three headings depending on the degree of structure involved: (a) unstructured, (b) semi-structured and (c) structured interviews (Kvale, 1996; Burns, 2000) and they are well categorised into a one-to-one interview and focus group interview (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Fontana & Frewy, 1994; Padget, 1998; May, 1997). Fact finding through interview is a core skill for most researchers in order to



establish a dynamic and interactive atmosphere which should help facilitate discussion of issues related to the research topic and help to get a clear and objective picture of the topic being investigated (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). In this study, the semi-structured interview was deemed to be an appropriate method for achieving this aim since the interview provides access to what a person knows, thinks and feels about a situation or event and provides the opportunity to crosscheck and validate other research methods (Cohen et al. 2000). Furthermore, since the planned number of participants was fairly small (25), semi-structured interviews were considered most appropriate:

*“ Semi-structured interviewing is the style most likely to be followed in small scale research, when it is of greater importance to gain the cooperation of a limited number of interviewees than it is to ensure that the information they give is supplied in a standardised and easily collectable form.” (Johnson, 1994:51)*

Semi-structured interviews have a number of well documented strengths, including: the researcher's ability to probe the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee by changing or adding some questions as necessary in order to establish a dynamic and interactive atmosphere. This should facilitate discussion of issues related to the research topic (Schurink, 2001). In this regard, Burgess (1993) argues that the semi-structured interview gives opportunities for the interviewees to develop their answers outside the structured format. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewees are given the freedom to express their feelings and thoughts in order to obtain rich data which is not always possible in the case of the questionnaire (Hagan, 2000). Furthermore, the interview schedule guide is flexible so the researcher can collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic (Cohen & Manion, 2000; Kvale, 1996). This can help in producing in-depth information about the topic and providing insight to the participants' thoughts and feelings. People are often more ready to talk than to write (Best, 1991; Mouly, 1978). Notably in Oman there is evidence that government officials and executives prefer to be interviewed face-to-face rather than put their answers in writing (Al Hammami, 1999).

Semi-structured interviews also have a number of disadvantages, for example, the data preparation and analysis stages are very difficult and time consuming (Denscombe, 1999). To reduce problems of bias, interviews were planned and written beforehand and identical questions were asked to all interviewees. Furthermore, the issue of confidentiality was addressed by ensuring the research participants that the information provided, would only be used for research purposes.

#### **4.5.2.1 Sampling Strategy**

Two semi-structured interview schedules were designed (See Appendix I). The first set of interviews was conducted with ten R&S personnel. The second set of interviews was conducted with five school districts officials and with ten head teachers.

The interviewees were selectively chosen by the researcher. Hagan (2000: 144) defines this type of sampling procedure as 'purposive'. That is, one in which the sample is selected on the basis of one's own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims. It is a non-probability sampling technique, as the data (context, participants and events) are carefully selected for the important information they can provide (Maxwell, 1998). Purposive sampling is popular in qualitative research. It is often used with small numbers of individuals/groups and provides understanding of human perceptions, problems, needs, behaviours and contexts, which are often the main justification for conducting qualitative research (Babbie & Maxfield, 1995). Patton (1990) lists a number of sub-categories of purposive sampling, including: extreme case sampling; intensity sampling; maximum variation sampling; homogeneous sampling; typical case sampling; stratified purposeful sampling; critical case sampling; snowball or chain sampling; criterion sampling; theory-based or operational construct sampling; confirming or disconfirming sampling; purposeful random sampling and politically important sampling; convenience sampling.

The sample for this research can be described as stratified purposive sampling. The decision to use this approach was based on the fact that the research has already deployed

methods from the scientific paradigms (probability sampling procedures) in the selection of the teachers to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative sampling procedures was employed to produce a more inclusive picture of the topic under investigation. The steps followed in sampling the informants for the semi-structured interviews were the following: first the names of recruiters from the both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service were collected (stage sampling). The whole population was 57 (25 representatives from the Ministry of Education and 32 representatives from the Ministry of Civil Service). Subsequently, recruiters were categorised according to their rate of recurrence in R&S operation (stratified sampling). Five individuals from each Ministry were selected (See Table 4.1). The sample was selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement of the appropriateness of each of these individuals (purposive sampling). This included the participants' length of experience, knowledge and their perceived willingness to take part in the interview process and for their voice to be heard.

**Table 4.1 Description of Recruiters Sample According to Organisation and Gender**

Organisation	Male	Female	Total
Ministry of Education	3	2	5
Ministry of Civil Service	4	1	5
Total	7	3	10

The sample of head teachers was selected in the following way. The names of 72 head teachers distributed between the three educational districts (Muscat, Interior and Musandam) that were included in survey questionnaire were collected and sorted by gender. Ten participants were handpicked from this sample by the researcher. In addition, 5 district officials were selectively chosen from a population of 42 (See Table 4.1). Each of the head teachers and the educational district officials was purposively selected on the basis of the individual information, including: reputation in the community, their contribution and involvement in school related activities and workshops along with their working experience and their perceived willingness to actively and candidly participate in the interview process. The sample size of 15 participants was justified on the basis that it would be sufficient to capture the essence and variety of the single centralised management

system that governs the working lives of the total populations of 72 Head teachers and 42 district officials. The difference in number of participants between educational districts is a reflection of the number of schools, head teachers, teachers and students in each educational district.

**Table 4.2 Description of Head Teachers/District Officials Sample According to Educational Districts and Gender**

<b>Educational District</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Total</b>
Muscat	Head Teacher	4
Muscat	District Official	2
Interior	Head Teacher	4
Interior	District Official	2
Musandam	Head Teacher	2
Musandam	District Official	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15</b>

This combination of sampling methods allowed the construction of a sample that addressed the research aims and questions of this study. That is, it provided information about stakeholders' understanding of, and reactions to, the current R&S policies and procedures; and, allowed these views to be compared with the accounts of individuals recently recruited using these systems.

#### **4.5.2.2 Conducting the Interviews**

The interviews were piloted in the UK and Oman with the researchers' colleagues and then the questions were revised. The interviews were carried out in the offices of the participants. Six out of twenty-five participants agreed to the use of tape recorder and thus in 21 cases, extensive interview notes had to be taken. At the beginning of the conversation, the researcher explained the subject and the purpose of the interview. At the start of the interview the participants were informed about the nature and the aims of the research. Respondents were informed that their identities and personal information would be kept confidential and would not be referred to in the body of the dissertation. They were also informed that only the researcher would have access to the information and that the

research would be used for writing the dissertation. During the interview process, probing was used to focus and clarify the responses given by the participants. (For example, one of the interviewees criticised the Ministry of Education for not involving schools in the teacher R&S process which lead the researcher to ask them for clarification). Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

#### 4.5.3 Survey Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>

Since the basic aim of this research was to evaluate the present teacher R&S practices and the research population was large, using a questionnaire survey was considered to be the most suitable method for this study. Smith et al. (1992) indicate that questionnaires are very widely used in large-scale investigations of political opinions and consumer preference. Besides, questionnaire surveys have proved to be an effective and appropriate method for conducting empirical research:

*“... Questionnaires are effective for producing straight-forward descriptive information. They facilitate coverage of a wide range of situations and are a comparatively speedy and efficient method of gathering data”. (Munn & Drever, 1995: 2).*

Moreover, a questionnaire-based approach can provide statistical generalisability (Wiersma, 1991), which is an important aim of this research. In addition, statistical tests can easily be used to assess the probability of the result being accurate, and to make comparisons between different groups and populations using computerised analysis (Robson, 1993). For example, in this research comparison was made between genders, educational districts and primary and secondary teachers. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software was used in the analysis of the findings of this work. In addition, self-completed questionnaires are economical and relatively quick method of information gathering. In most cases, questionnaires place less pressure on an immediate (spontaneous)

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<sup>1</sup> Additional information about the questionnaire survey can be found in Appendix D

answer and give respondents a greater feeling of anonymity (Bell, 1993). Furthermore, anonymous questionnaires have the added feature of being able to elicit more candid replies (Mouly, 1978).

There are however, a number of limitations to this approach. For example, it is possible for the researcher, relative to the sample selected and summarisation methods used, to influence the findings. In addition, the questionnaire is not always able to capture the significance respondents might attach to a particular issue (Fetterman, 1998). The research method also has the weakness of being impersonal. Moreover, the quality of the data obtained and the rate of response cannot be guaranteed and respondents may not tell the truth. Besides, lack of control over the respondents may distort the responses, for example, a respondent may consult another respondent or a friend for an answer (Sapford & Jupp, 1996). Further, a lack of control over question order may bias the respondent (it is very likely that the respondent will glance through the entire questionnaire before starting to answer). The mood of the respondent and the surrounding atmosphere may affect their answer, and are usually unknown by the researcher. Finally, it does not allow for any dialogue i.e. follows up, probing, and reminding questions (Mouly, 1978; Gill & Johnson, 1997).

#### **4.5.3.1 The Content of the Questionnaire**

The research questionnaire was divided into four separate parts that represent the standard R&S process followed when hiring teachers for public schools in Oman as illustrated in Table 4.2

**Table 4. 3: Questionnaire Sections and Number of Items in Each Section**

No	Name of Category	Number of items
1	Demographic information	4
2	Recruitment process	17
3	Selection process	31
4	Orientation and Socialisation Process	13
Total		65

The questionnaire had 65 items, which were grouped under four categories that were meant to facilitate data analysis and discussion as illustrated below:

Section one was designed to collect basic demographic information regarding the participant' gender, qualifications, level of teaching, school district and date of employment.

Section two was divided into two elements. The first was designed to investigate participants' motivation for choosing the teaching profession and the advertisement methods that had initially attracted them to finding out about the job. The second element contained seventeen statements, designed to measure the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the recruitment process. It included questions about advertisements, the Ministry of Education website, the initial treatment that the participants received in their inquiry about the job, the structure of the application form, initial interview and feedback that thy received regarding their status of being selected for the following selection process.

Section three consisted of thirty one questions relating to participants' experiences of the selection process; the general interview environment; the types of questions asked by the interviewers; the type of interview used by the examiners, and the medical exam process.

Section four investigated respondents' evaluation of the orientation programmes organised by schools for the newly recruited teachers and the socialisation processes thy received in their first appointment.

#### **4.5.3.2 Questionnaire Format**

Questions were structured mainly in the form of five point Likert scales: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. This was because the five point scale is the most practical for most common purposes (Verma and Mallick, 1999). The questionnaire also included a number of open-ended questions in order to provide the participants with the opportunity to express their opinions and to overcome the

limitations of the closed statements. These open questions also provided the opportunity to capture unexpected and unanticipated data from the respondents.

#### **4.5.3.3 Validating and Piloting the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed and written in Arabic: the mother tongue of the proposed respondents. The questionnaire was scrutinised and critiqued by a panel of experts from Sultan Qaboos University, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education as well as by a focus group composed of practising teachers. The comments of these groups were used to modify the questionnaire, which was then piloted with a representative sample of fifty teachers.

#### **4.5.3.4 Questionnaire Sampling Frame**

Morgan and Harmon (1999: 1) define sampling as:

*“.... the process of selecting part of a larger group with the intent of generalising from the smaller group, called the sample, to the population, the larger group. If we are to make valid inferences about the population, we must select the sample so that it is representative of the total population”.*

The power of sample surveys is their ability to obtain information from relatively few respondents to describe the characteristics of an entire population (Salant & Dillman, 1994; Seaberg, 1988; Grinnell, 1993). Smith and et al (1992: 122) state:

*“The main aim of sampling is to construct a sub-set of the population which is fully representative in the main area of interest. It is then possible to infer statistically the likelihood that a pattern observed in the sample will also be replicated in the population”.*

Thus, to gather objective and accurate information the researcher should try to meet a number of essential requirements when selecting the sample. These, according to Salant and Dillman, (1994: 5) are that; the sample is large enough to yield the desired level of precision; everyone in the population has an equal (or known) chance to being selected for



the sample; questions are asked in ways that enable the people in the sample to respond willingly and accurately; the characteristics of people selected in the sampling process but who do not participate in the survey are similar to the characteristics of those who do.

Systematic sampling was employed to meet as many of the above-mentioned principles as possible and to reduce potential bias, using the rationale and method outlined below:

1. The main objective was to obtain both the desirable accuracy and confidence level at minimum cost. 500 respondents were taken from 6657 (the whole population) so the percentage of the sample is about 8%, which is appropriate for generalising about the whole population. This is because researchers are in agreement that the bigger the size the better the outcomes (Bryman & Cramer, 1997; Gay & Diehl, 1992; Cohen & Manion 2000).
2. As discussed in Chapter Two, R&S decisions are centralised at the Ministry's headquarters and thus the researcher obtained lists of teachers recruited between 2002-2004 and who were distributed between the three educational districts in which the researcher chose to carry out this study. These districts were: Muscat (The capital), Dakhilia (Interior), and Musandam (a rural area). The motive behind selecting those three educational districts was that they are representative of the distribution of schools in Oman.
3. The sample was divided between two groups: Primary and Secondary teachers
4. The sample was further divided on the basis of gender
5. From the primary group, 60% were female teachers selected randomly from each district and 40% were male. Secondary teachers were selected randomly but equally between the two genders (50% each gender). By applying this random method, both genders had an equal chance of being selected from the whole population. The difference in numbers of candidates between the two genders in the primary level was a reflection of the actual statistics published by the Ministry of Education, which indicate that there are more female than male teachers at the primary level.
6. Two hundred teachers were selected from Muscat district and a similar number were selected from Dakhilia district, whereas one hundred teachers were selected from Musandam. The difference in number of participants from each district reflects the number

of schools, teachers and students in that district.

The following tables provide more information about the research sample and its characteristics according to school, gender and instructional level:

**Table: 4.4 Distribution of Sample Items According to Gender and Type of School**

Type of School	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	100	20	150	30	250	50
Secondary	125	25	125	25	250	50
Total	225	45	275	55	500	100

**Table 4.5 Description of Sample According to Districts and Gender**

School District	Type of School	Male	Female	Total Number
Muscat	Secondary	50	50	100
Muscat	Primary	40	60	100
Dakhilia	Secondary	50	50	100
Dakhilia	Primary	40	60	100
Musandam	Secondary	25	25	50
Musandam	Primary	20	30	50
Total	-	225	275	500

#### 4.5.3.5 Administering the Questionnaires

Five hundred questionnaires were distributed in person by the researcher to the teachers in the school year 2002/2003. This was because as mentioned by Vulliamy, et al. (1990: 130) “questionnaires administered by post can have low response rates”. The teachers were in 72 different schools, teaching different subjects and different instructional levels. The questionnaires were administered on an individual or group basis depending on the size of the school and the number of participants in each school. Respondents were assured that the information collected would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and the information would only be used for the purpose of research. In addition, respondents were not asked to give their names or any information by which they could be identified.

#### 4.5.3.6 Missing Data

From the 500 questionnaires, four respondents were absent at the time when the survey was conducted. Thus, those four questionnaires were ignored and a total of 496 questionnaires were analysed. The frequencies of the missing data for all variables in the questionnaire are represented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.76 Missing Data Account**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid .00	358	72.2	72.2	72.2
1.00	87	17.5	17.5	89.7
2.00	37	7.5	7.5	97.2
3.00	3	0.6	0.6	97.8
4.00	8	1.6	1.6	99.4
5.00	2	0.4	0.4	99.8
6.00	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	496	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in category .00, there were 358 (72%) questionnaires that had no missing values; in other words, there were 358 respondents who provided valid answers for all of the questions. 138 (26.8%) participants didn't answer all the questions. However, missing data is common in surveys, and the total amount here is comparatively low and was not considered to represent a significant threat to the statistical generalisability of the study's findings.

#### 4.6 Validity

Validity is concerned with the soundness and effectiveness of the measuring instrument, (Merriam, 1998; Leedey, 1997). Smith (1991: 106) states that '*...validity is the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure*'. Thus, validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman, 2001). A number of factors were considered to ensure the validity of this research, as outlined below.

1. Face validity is concerned with whether an indicator really measures the thing it is

supposed to measure (Dippo, 1997). To make sure that the questionnaire had high face validity the following steps were followed:

- The researcher scrutinised the questionnaire with the help of experts from Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. This helped to ensure the clarity of the questions and their appropriateness to the Omani context, as well as ensuring that their meaning reflected the content of the Likert scales.
- Clear instructions were given in each section of the questionnaire to help ensure that respondents did not misunderstand the different sections.
- Also, simple wording was used to facilitate the respondents' understanding of the items.

2. Content validity asks whether a particular measure or set of measures represent all the relevant definitional aspects of a construct (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). To check the content validity of the questionnaire the researcher took certain actions that included:

- A review of the questionnaire by a panel of experts from Sultan Qaboos University and the Ministry of Education in Oman. The researcher decided to consult those people, as they carry out research regularly and thus have considerable knowledge and a background in Omani culture. The experts were asked to comment on the questions with respect to the variables the questionnaire was designed to measure. They were also asked to test the questionnaire in terms of the research questions and the objectives of the study. Very useful comments were received and the questionnaire was amended accordingly.
- The instrument was also piloted on a sample of teachers with the same characteristics as those used for the study and this also helped to ensure its validity before it was used to gather data from the final sample.

Regarding the validity of interviews, it should be noted that interviews are often criticised for incorporating unrecognised and uncontrolled sources of bias (Cohen & Manion, 1994), therefore it was important to take this issue into consideration. In order to reduce the bias, suggestions given by researchers (e.g. Cicourel, 1964; Patton, 1990; Robson, 1993; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994) were adopted when interviewing the stakeholders.

For example, sending the interview schedule to the stakeholders beforehand gave them a chance to prepare and this, therefore, helped prevent problems of misunderstanding questions and consequently reduced the chance of unprofitable answers. Furthermore, an attempt was made to create trust and to eliminate differences between the interviewer and the interviewee through casual conversations about daily life before starting the interview. Moreover, to make it less likely that stakeholders would give the researcher the answers they thought he wanted and not those they believed to be right (quixotic reliability), leading questions were avoided at the preparation stage of the interview schedule. Furthermore, during the interviews, the researcher tried to avoid expressing his personal views about certain issues by not showing facial expressions, types of intonation and gestures or any other subtle cues as to his personal opinion, so as not to influence their responses.

#### **4.7 Reliability**

Reliability can be defined as consistency over time, over instruments and over a group of respondents (Cohen et al., 2000). This means that the same procedures used by other researchers should produce the same results (Yin, 1994; Bryman, 2001). Thus, reliability indicates whether a measure produces dependable and consistent measurement of the variable being analysed. With reliability, the researcher wants to be sure that any variation in the variable from one measurement event to the next is caused by actual changes in the variable itself and not by the fact that the measuring instrument (e.g.. a questionnaire scale) yields unreliable information from respondents (Silverman, 1993).

Bryman (2001) argues that reliability is particularly an issue with quantitative research, as quantitative researchers are usually concerned with the issue of whether a measure is stable or not. Three principle types of reliability have been identified (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Hox, et al. 1991; Dippo, 1997):

1. Stability reliability: Whether the same measure delivers the same answer when used in different time periods.
2. Representative reliability: This measure of reliability asks whether the measuring instrument produces the same measure of a variable when used with different

groups of people.

3. Equivalence reliability: When a particular characteristic or phenomenon is measured using multiple measures (that may then be combined), each of these measures should yield consistent results.

Silverman (2000) suggests that the investigator should utilise techniques such as thorough planning of the research, using well-designed methods, using representative sampling and fieldwork, all of which play a major role in reducing threats against reliability and validity of the research.

These principles were applied in this research as explained earlier and an action plan was prepared to guide the researcher during the different stages in the implementation of this research in order to ensure that research stages were conducted as planned and data was collected at the appropriate time, to reduce threats to reliability. In addition, the present study was also triangulated by using various methods to enhance validity and to maximise the reliability of the research's findings as well as to seek in-depth information and a deeper understanding of the topic and to overcome the limitations of using only one method (Kidder, et al. 1986; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990; Vulliamy et al. 1990; Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measure a single one-dimensional latent construct. When data has a multidimensional structure, Cronbach's alpha will usually be low (Bryman and Cramer, 1997). Cronbach's alpha is derived from the average correlation of all of items on the scale. It ranges in value from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating greater reliability. The questionnaire was divided into three dimensions, and the reliability coefficient alpha was computed for each dimension. The results are shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.8 Alpha Reading for the Questionnaire's Main Sections**

Section	Alpha
1. Recruitment process	0.8837
2. Selection Process	0.9637
3. Orientation	0.8240
4. Overall	0.9677

The value of overall Alpha in the table is 0.96, which indicates a statically significant relationship between variables and indicates a remarkable co-efficient alpha among the scale items. As a rule of thumb the value of alpha should be 0.70 or above (Bagozzi, 1994).

To ensure the reliability of the interviews, a semi-structured format with open-ended questions was used. The choice was made because of its advantage over structured interviews. Structured interviews with “pre-established questions”, which are mainly, closed questions, and a predetermined “coding scheme” do not allow room for modification and probing and they can be regarded as spoken forms of questionnaires (Fontana & Frey, 1994). On the part of the interviewees, structured interviews do not give the interviewees enough freedom to express themselves freely and this may lead to insufficient data. These considerations should reduce bias and thus increase reliability of the interviews (Johnson, 1994).

#### **4.8 Ethical Issues**

Ethics can be described as “the rules of conduct” (Robson, 1993). It is concerned with good and bad, right and wrong. Ethics determine general principles of what one must do. Ethical issues might arise at any stage of the research process. The research design, which involves the use of questionnaire and interviews, raises some ethical issues, which include invasion of privacy, permission, anonymity, confidentiality and interruption (Mertens, 1998; Blaxter et al., 1996). The National Commission of Human Subjects and Biomedical Research as cited in Mertens (1998: 24) name three ethical principle and six norms that should guide research:

a) The ethical principles are:

1. **Beneficence:** maximising good outcomes for science, humanity and the individual research participants while minimising or avoiding unnecessary risk harm or wrong.
2. **Respect:** treating people with respect and courtesy, including those who are not autonomous.
3. **Justice:** ensuring that those who bear the risk in the research are the ones who benefit from it and ensuring that the procedures are reasonable, non-exploitive, carefully considered, and carefully administered.

b) The ethical norms are:

1. Using valid research designs
2. The researcher must be competent to conduct the research
3. Consequences of research must be identified
4. The sample selection must be appropriate for the purpose of the research
5. The participants must agree to participate in the study through voluntary informed consent.
6. The researcher must inform the participants as to whether harm will be compensated

In the present study, the researcher tried to overcome the ethical issues associated with the design of the research by seeking consent of the participants and explaining the purpose of the research to them. Furthermore, during the data collection stages, all participants were assured of full confidentiality and anonymity for the information they gave. During the analysis process, the need to 'respect truth' (Cohen et al. 2000) was rigorously respected and names of the participants were not revealed and when necessary, specific details concerning them were intentionally omitted. Cohen and Manion, (1994: 366) assert that *"The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity"*.



However, the researcher wishes to point out that it is extremely difficult to safeguard against the violation of some of these ethical issues in absolute terms as far as social research is concerned. For instance, it is difficult to secure in absolute terms the idea of anonymity in qualitative research which makes use of interviews, as the researcher might at times make use of direct responses and the number of the interviewee e.g. [interviewee 2] etc in the final writing up.

#### **4.9 General Data Analysis Framework**

Ackroyd and Hughes (1996) point out that data of whatever type, do not just emerge or lie around waiting to be casually picked up by some passing social researcher but have to be given form and shape in order to qualify as data made relevant to a researcher's problem. Thus, a careful analysis was carried out so as to elicit the extent to which the R&S processes are effective in hiring the right teachers for Oman's public schools.

##### **4.9.1 Analysing the Documentary Data**

In this research, data obtained from documents was analysed using ethnographic methods from which the researcher tries to tell a convincing story about a given document (Hodson, 1999). The aim was to find as many details as possible about the current teacher R&S in order to understand more deeply the current situation and thus validate the research findings. Systematic steps were followed when analysing the research documents. First, the documents were read repeatedly in order to fully understand the processes and practices currently utilised when hiring new teachers. Second, the data was grouped according to the systematic organisation of the questionnaire and interviews. Third, the findings obtained from these documents were compared with best R&S practices found in the literature reviewed in Chapter Three. Fourth, these findings were verified through comparison between what was actually written in papers and what was performed in real life as understood from the research interviews. Finally, the data obtained from the documents was compared with the data that resulted from the interviews and the questionnaire analysis.

#### 4.9.2 Analysing the Semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative analysis was employed to analyse the results of the interviews. Several steps were followed when analysing the interviews, recommended in the related literature (Dey, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Denzin, 1997). First, the recorded interviews were transcribed. Then, the researcher went through the interview scripts several times to better understand the content. After that, answers for each question were entered into a table (See Figure 4.1). Sets of categories were developed from the responses by establishing sub-categories for each question. These categories were designed to fit the topics addressed in the basic questions of the research questionnaire. Linking the interviews' responses to the questionnaire's responses improved the researcher's understanding of the data collected and enhanced the research findings.

Figure 4. 1: Interviews Data Analysis

Q-#	What is included in the form?	Theme
ME1	Not very detailed information, we ask the applicant for some personal information, the qualification he/she has, date and place of obtaining those qualifications	Recruitment
MIA2	Not very detailed information, we ask the applicant for some personal information, the qualification he/she has, date and place of obtaining those qualifications	
ME3	Not much really, just general information about the applicant such as, the qualification he/she has, name of University or college, year of graduation etc. Anyway, I will give an example after the interview.	
MCA1	Well, we ask the applicants to write simple information about him/herself such as schools he/she attended, qualification, college or university they obtained their qualification from and their hobbies	
MCA2	Well, we ask the applicants to write simple information about him/herself such as schools he/she attended, qualification, college or university they obtained their qualification from and their hobbies	
MCA3	Well, we ask the applicants to write simple information about him/herself such as schools he/she attended, qualification, college or university they obtained their qualification from and their hobbies	
Q-12	What types of selection methods do you use in selecting teaching staff?	Selection
ME1	The only method followed is the selection interview and this is applicable to all public sectors not only the Ministry of Education	
ME2	The only method followed is the selection interview and this	

However, there were some findings that were not expected, and thus did not correspond with the three major themes (the recruitment practices, the selection practices and the orientation practices) that were suggested by the literature review and were used in the design of the questionnaire and in the structure of the interview questions.

Coded data from the questionnaires were entered into the computer using the SPSS<sup>2</sup>. After the data was entered, the researcher double-checked data entry then ran a frequency screening for the data to make sure that there were no missing cases (Pallant, 2001). This was followed by an analysis of the missing data. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents using the frequency procedure shown in graphs and tables. Mean ratings of a range of teachers' responses were also reported to gain an indication of the strength and range of teachers' perceptions of the R&S effectiveness. The Likert scale consisted of five points and views were judged according to the overall average of the scores as shown in the following figure.

Inferential statistics that contained various statistical procedures were used to analyse the data. This included: a) T-tests, ANOVA tests and Chi-square tests to check the relationship between the variables of interest b) Scaling procedures, such as factor analysis, to assess the dimensionality of a set of variables.

<sup>2</sup> SPSS is one of the most popular statistical packages, and can perform highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions (Punch, 1998: 134).

frequencies were obtained and presented in tables. Statistical tests were also used to examine the differences between demographic factors and to check the relationship between a number of variables. In addition, the themes that emerged from the open-ended questions were compared with the data that resulted from the interviews and the document analysis. The responses obtained from the open-ended questions together with the unanticipated answers obtained from the interviews, provided some of the most significant findings of the thesis, which are discussed in Chapter seven.

#### **4.10 Summary of Research Methods**

This chapter has detailed how the elements that informed the overall research design were linked to each other before the field work commenced. In designing the research, the researcher reviewed the theoretical and empirical work carried out in the same field of study. The researcher then developed several research questions related to the R&S process, representing the best practices as explained in the review of literature. Accordingly, the researcher selected the methods that would be used to undertake the empirical part of the study. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to carry out the field study. This included document analysis, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The research population was selected by stratified sampling structured to represent all the stakeholders concerned. The target population for the questionnaire were 500 newly recruited teachers distributed between three regions (Muscat, Interior and Musandam), representing of the geographical distribution of public schools in Oman, which is the group to which the results were being generalized. Twenty five semi-structured interviews were conducted with recruiters, school district officials and head teachers. The study was carried out in the school year 2002/2003. The researcher travelled throughout the regions distributing and collecting questionnaires as well as conducting the semi-structured interviews. The research design also included consideration of issues relating to validity, reliability and ethics.

The results of the research initiatives outlined above are contained in the next two chapters. Chapter Five presents an analysis of the documents and interviews data while Chapter Six presents the results of the questionnaire survey using statistical calculation, tables, and graphs to explore the links between a number of themes and categories.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTARY SOURCES AND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This Chapter analyses the data collected from documentary sources and semi-structured interviews. The results are presented in two parts. Part one discusses the analysis of official documents describing the recruitment and selection of teachers in Oman. Part two presents the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with a sample of significant stakeholders i.e., R&S personnel; school district officials and head teachers. The chapter aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the R&S practices used to hire new teachers for Oman's public schools?
2. To what extent do these practices correspond with the best practices recommended in the published literature?
3. To what extent do the perceptions of the interviewed stakeholders correspond with each other and with the related documents?

### **5.2 Analysis of Official Documents**

This section analyses teacher R&S practices as described in official documents published by Omani government agencies with responsibility for this function. It examines the extent to which the current R&S practices meet the demands of the Basic law (1996) which considers citizens equal in taking up public employment, and if these practices meet the merit-based approach which is the stated aim of the Ministry of Civil Service (see Chapter Two). Furthermore, the current R&S practices revealed in this data set are compared with the best R&S practices found in the corpus of literature reviewed in chapter three.

### **5.2.1 The Recruitment and Selection of New Teachers**

The Directorate General of Administration in the Ministry of Education carries out the function of estimating the staffing requirements of Omani schools. This is calculated from government statistics on students, teachers, schools and projected population growth, estimated by the Ministry of Health. The estimated requirement is supplied to the Ministry of Civil Service and these figures initiate the teacher R&S process.

The system is highly centralised: the Ministry of Civil Service is responsible for implementing recruitment procedures, announcing vacancies, accepting applications and administration of all selection procedures. This is a reflection of Omani national culture which favours highly centralised management systems (Recabi, 2001). Indeed, Article 4 of Omani Civil Service Law (1980) gives the Ministry of Civil Service the power to formulate and implement employment rules and procedures. This power was further reinforced by Royal Decree No. 71/96 which provides the Ministry of Civil Service full authority in the R&S of public personnel (Ministry of Civil Service, 2003). According to documentation from the Ministry of Civil service, the centralisation of R&S reduces favouritism, and fosters fair competition between job applicants, based on efficiency, capacity and their ability to perform the prescribed job duties (Ministry of Civil Service, 2002). However, R&S best practice as described in the HRM literature does not support the total centralisation of R&S (Wise et al. 1987, Hill and Casteel, 1994). Indeed, research findings support a decentralisation of teacher R&S which allows schools to carry out their own activities and make their own decisions about whether or not applicants meet the requirement of the vacant position and fit the culture of the school (Liu and Johnson, 2003). In addition, decentralisation means that the applicants can experience the working environment and conditions of the specific job and school for which they have applied. This localised recruitment has the potential to provide applicants with a realistic job preview: a factor that has been found to significantly affect the quality of R&S outcomes (Wanous, 1992; Ryan and Ployhart, 2000).

### **5.2.2 Job Analysis**

Article 14 of the Civil Service Law (1980:8) states that educational qualifications, experience and job characteristics are considered important when employing public servants including teacher (Ministry of Civil Service, 1980). However, official R&S documents (2003) do not include job analysis as a factor when hiring public employees. This may be due to the fact that formal job descriptions and person specifications have not yet been formulated (Ministry of Civil Service, 2003). This is clearly contradicted by the results of the literature review, which emphasises that best practice cannot be achieved in the absence of job descriptions and person specifications (Parry, 1994). Job analysis provides the basis for selection of the best candidate on the basis of job related criteria. Comprehensive job analysis will ensure that candidates have accurate expectations of the job and, if they are appointed, that they are unlikely to be disappointed. This, in turn should aid retention (Parry, 1994; Armstrong, 1999; Torrington et al., 2002). Thus, the concept of a merit based employment system, which is enshrined in Oman's Basic Law (1996) and article 15 of the Civil Service Law (1980), seems to be difficult to realise without first undertaking a structured and thorough job analysis.

### **5.2.3 Job Advertisement**

Teaching vacancies are announced in the national press, television and radio by the Ministry of Civil Service (Ministry of Civil Service, 2003). These advertisements normally include: job title, the number of vacancies available, qualifications required, age range, physical fitness, the place where the applicant can submit their qualifications and the starting and closing date for the submission of applications.

As previously stated, these advertisements are not based on job analysis and do not provide candidates with much information about the job or the organisation. There is no indication of why the recruiting organisation believes an applicant should be interested in the job. This is in contrast with the views of many authors (Redman & Mathews, 1992, 1995; Caples, 1997; Barber, 1998; Turban et al., 1998; Connerley et al., 2003) who indicate that



the job advertisement is the first and perhaps the most important step in the recruitment process because it encourages the applicant to take the first step to learn more about the particular employment opportunity. Rynes (1991) argues that job advertisements based on job descriptions can have two significant impacts on the reaction of job applicants. These are: i) failing to provide job-related information results in less favourable applicant perceptions of the recruitment message and ii) information about job attributes can positively or negatively influence applicants' reactions to the recruitment message. Connerley et al., (2001: 301) argue that if top candidates do not apply, an organisation has no opportunity to hire them. Thus, the eventual outcomes of the R&S process are significantly influenced by the quality of the job advertisement (Breaugh, 1992).

#### **5.2.4 Application Form**

Job applicants are required to complete a standardised application form. These forms are designed to ensure that applicants meet the basic requirements of vacancies and include personal data, educational training and work experience. A central R&S committee studies information supplied by each candidate and verifies this data against each candidates' educational certificates.

Job applicants are not asked to submit references either from previous employers or, schools, universities or any other persons with close knowledge of the candidate.

Studies have shown that job references are extensively used in most staff selection systems (Lilenthal, 1980: Ryan et al., 1999). These studies also suggest that the role of written references is not only to verify information given by the applicant but also to provide additional information for making selection decisions (Taylor et al. 2004). The purpose of obtaining references is to confirm or gain factual information on an applicant's educational background, current job, salary, length of service, attendance, disciplinary and health record, and the extent to which they meet the selection criteria for the job (Cook, 1999). In most Western countries the reference letter is considered to be an essential element in any teacher recruitment process. In fact, it is regarded by many teacher recruiters to be the most

important information link between the likely employer and those who are most familiar with the applicant's training and qualifications for that position (Nash, 1986; Natter & Kuder, 1983; Clement, 2000).

Furthermore, job applicants are not asked to submit CVs with their applications. This approach is inconsistent with the accounts of best practice found in the literature in which CVs are considered to be a useful method of gaining insights into a candidates' potential to perform in the post (Taylor, 1998; Burt, 1993; Schermerhorn, 2002). Indeed, a great deal of emphasis is put on the role a CV plays in the hiring process, as it is considered to be a reflection of the candidate's true personality (Davison, 1985; Hackney & Kleiner, (1994).

### **5.2.5 Selection Interviews**

Applicants are invited to attend selection interviews that are conducted by a board made up of representatives from the Ministry of Civil Service, and the Ministry of Education. To meet the requirements of the official guidelines, these interviewers must possess the necessary knowledge of the vacant post; relevant working experience, and have undertaken interview skills training. This is consistent with recommendations for best R&S practice (Judge et al. 2000; Roberts, 2003; Peterson, 2002; Iddekinge et al. 2004).

## **5.3 Analysis of Stakeholder Interviews**

This section explores teacher R&S practices in Oman from the perspectives of a sample of recruiters, school districts officials and head teachers. The broad aim is to obtain the visions of those in charge of R&S during this period of comprehensive educational reform and to examine the extent to which the accounts of these individuals correspond with the account contained within official government, legal and ministerial documents, and with the accounts contained within the best practice literature reviewed in chapter three.

This analysis is organised around four major themes: the preliminary procedures; the recruitment process; the selection process, and the orientation process. These correspond

with the findings of the literature review and they provided the basic structure of the survey questionnaire, administered to the novice teachers and analysed in chapter six.

### **5.3.1 Theme One: The R&S Process**

The entire sample of 25 respondents (10 teacher recruiters employed by government ministries, 5 school district officials and 10 head teachers) reported that teachers, as any other public employees, are hired through a centralised process occurring within the Ministry of Civil Service. Some illustrations of responses in this category were:

The teacher R&S process is similar to R&S for other public employees. It is a centralised process that takes place at the Ministry of Civil Service (R3).

Teachers are hired here in Muscat (The capital of Oman). This starts when the requirements for new personnel are received from the school districts. Then, we write to the Ministry of Civil Service to advertise the vacancies and carry out the subsequent R&S process (R4).

The Ministry of Civil Service is responsible for all civil employees in Oman. All procedures are centralised for all posts, whether filled internally or externally (R5).

....the 1997 Centralised Recruitment Act was a reaction to bias and nepotism. This helped to limit nepotism and for the first time R&S was based on possession of meritorious characteristics (R10).

These accounts are consistent with the data obtained from the official documents (See 5.2.1).

#### **5.3.1.1 Persons Included in the Teacher R&S Process**

When asked who is involved in teacher R&S, seven of the ministry recruiters ( $n = 10$ ) reported that administrators at the level of both the headquarters of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service carried out the hiring activities and had overall responsibility for selecting the new teachers for Oman's public schools:

Employees from the Directorate General of Administration usually represent the Ministry of Education. These members are selected from the Ministry and a decision about the establishment of such committee is issued by the Director General of Administration or the Under Secretary every time there are vacancies to be filled (R5).

In the Ministry of Civil Service, recruiters are appointed by the Director of R&S and they are normally from the same directorate (R2).

However, three from the sample of 10 recruiters reported that teacher R&S is sometimes conducted by educators. All recruiters ( $n = 10$ ) reported that administrators are included in all R&S committees:

... Occasionally teachers are recruited by a committee made up from educators, though administrators are presented in such committees (R9).

Furthermore, all ten ministry recruiters reported that there are no permanent members who represent both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service:

... But these members are not permanent. Different committees are established when there are personnel to be recruited (R1).

.... Every time R&S occurs a new committee is selected by the Director General of R&S. (R4).

Depending exclusively on ministry administrators to conduct teacher R&S seems an improbable way to secure the selection of the most qualified candidates, since these interviewers are unlikely to possess sufficient specialised job knowledge or job experience (Liu and Johnson, 2003). In addition, administrators are not usually in a position to provide accurate previews of the schools and the working environment of classroom teachers (Wanous, 1992). The accounts of these informants clearly contradict the statements contained in official documents (See 2.1.6), which state that all interviewers must possess knowledge of the vacant job and have related working experience.

### **5.3.1.2 Representation of Schools in the R&S Process**

School personnel are not directly involved in the process of teacher R&S. Informants were asked their opinions in relation to this, specifically, whether or not they thought it was important for schools to be represented in selecting their own personnel. A large majority (87%) of the head teachers and district officials strongly supported such involvement:

Yes. Schools or school districts should participate in teacher R&S because, they are more aware of the type of teachers they want and they have better skills and knowledge in assessing teacher applicants. In addition, they are more cautious in selecting the best applicant available for their schools. I am not accusing the Ministry's recruiters of being insincere, but it is really too much for them to carry out R&S every year for such a huge number of teachers without even getting help from those concerned, such as head teachers or teacher educators (HD3).

...By involving schools in teacher R&S, we provide better chances for both the employer and the employee to interact and get to know each other. The applicant can learn about the school's culture and their future colleagues and principals. Thus, they can make their own decisions on whether to accept the job offer or withdraw (HD9).

I strongly support the delegation of teacher R&S to schools and school districts because we are held accountable for effective teaching, while administrators are not held responsible for the performance of our schools. If we were delegated the authority, we would use our teaching knowledge, and experience to select teachers who fit into our local school environment (HD4).

In contrast, six of the ten ministry recruiters, currently responsible for teacher recruitment, did not see the involvement of schools as necessary:

I think you understand that those personnel have got degrees in education and thus they are qualified teachers, and are hired accordingly. In fact, we can carry out the job efficiently as we have the experience to do so. So I do not think it is necessary for schools to be represented (R3).

Since applicants meet the qualification requirements of schools, I do not think it is necessary for schools to be represented unless an R&S policy is established and implemented so schools can carry out hiring practices more efficiently ((R2).

Teachers are civilian employees and what is applicable to other sectors applies to them. Thus, we should not centralise R&S in one sector, while we delegate authority to others. This will not help to secure the principles of equality and merit (R6).

The literature reviewed in chapter three strongly advocates the direct involvement of individual schools in teacher R&S. The involvement of schools is seen as central in that it can provide candidates with an insight into the day-to-day reality of the job and its related activities. It can also help to introduce candidates to the school culture and job environment (Wise, et al., 1987; Liu and Johnson, 2003), and thereby increase the probability of teacher retention (Wanous, 1992; Rynes, 1991).

### **5.3.2 Theme Two: Recruitment Process**

The primary objective of recruitment is to build up a pool of suitable applicants that is large enough to enable the organisation to make selective hiring decisions (Parry, 1994). In order, that this objective is accomplished, there are various practices employers typically pursue, including: job advertisements, application forms, CVs, references and application screening (Roberts, 2003; Peterson, 2002; Parry, 1994). Respondents' views regarding these practices are presented in the following sections.

#### **5.3.2.1 Job advertisements**

All ten ministry recruiters confirmed that together with the ministry websites, a number of traditional methods are used to advertise job vacancies.

National newspapers, local TV and radio are the methods used in advertising job vacancies, (R8).

The following quotations are representative of the sort of information recruiters said the advertisements usually contained:

Job advertisement usually includes, job title, the number of vacancies available, qualifications required, place to present the application letter to and closing date for receipt of applications, (R7).

Advertisement usually includes the type of job available, the location of the job, the qualification required and the timing for application, (R10).

Although these accounts are consistent with official ministry documentation (see 5.2.3), they provide relatively little information and fall well short of the best practice recommendations found in the literature (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000; Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

#### **5.3.2.2 Application Forms**

All ten ministry recruiters reported that there is one type of application form that applies to all teaching jobs. This form asks for general personal details from applicants and is

intended to act as the basis for the personnel record of the individual, including such data as schools, colleges and universities attended, qualifications gained, and next of kin details.

The form currently in use is designed to ensure that job applicants meet the post's basic requirements namely; personal data such as the date and place of birth and educational and training qualifications. However, these forms fail to meet the recommendations for best R&S practices outlined in chapter 3 which advocate the development of an application form that is focused on precise selection criteria and competencies which predict job success and differentiate the best from the rest (Drakeley, 1989).

### **5.3.2.3 Methods Used to Inform the Applicants about the Selection Process**

Four-fifths ( $n = 8$ ) of ministry recruiters reported that there is no formal communication between job applicants and the central R&S office before the commencement of the interview process. Communication between the two parties is restricted to public announcements:

We usually announce the names of the qualified candidates in national press, television, Radio and the Ministry's website. We do not send letters to unqualified applicants but they can predict from the advertisement and sometimes, they call to enquire (R1).

This impersonal approach is directly opposed to the normative, best practice literature which argues that mistreatment in the R&S stages, or the exhibition of unprofessional manners in dealing with job applicants, may lead qualified applicants to withdraw their applications and seek employment elsewhere (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Research has shown that the applicants' reaction to the organisation is related to the way R&S is administered (Smither et al., 1993; Truxillo et al. 2002; Thiboudeaux & Kudisch, 2003; Madigan & Macan, 2005). In addition, the findings of Wise et al (1987) indicate that policies, procedures and communication during the R&S process can significantly influence individuals' views about the desirability of teaching as a profession.

#### **5.3.2.4 Recruiters' Opinions about the Use of CVs and References**

Almost all (90%) of ministry recruiters gave qualified support to the use of CVs and references in teacher R&S, as indicated by the following quotations:

It is a good idea to have such a device which can be used to learn more about the applicant but it should not be seen as a very reliable indication of competencies and skills, as most CVs are designed by experts and tailor-made for the applicant to show them in their best light to the employer (R5).

Yes, in order to obtain more information about the applicants and to give them the chance to express themselves. It overcomes the limitations of an oral interview, as there are some people who can express themselves in writing better than speaking. However, we should not rely too much on such aspects as it is very easy to design a good CV even from the Internet (R8).

Again, it is a good idea to obtain different views about the applicants but we should be mindful that references have their merits and drawbacks (R10).

Yes, because recruiters can verify the information that applicants give about themselves, but, as employers, we have to be aware about the quantity of information we request as referees may not have the time (R1).

Although these responses are in broad agreement with the best practice literature (Clement, 2000; Messmer, 2000; Torrington & Hall, 1998), they are directly opposite to the current practice, which does not make use of candidates' CVs or incorporate letters of reference.

#### **5.3.3 Theme three: The Selection Process**

According to the accounts of four-fifths ( $n = 8$ ) of ministry recruiters, the unstructured interview is the primary, and often the only, method used for selecting new teachers for Oman's public schools.

The unstructured interview is employed when selecting teachers for the public schools and this is applicable to all civil sectors (R9).

The unstructured interview is the primarily method used in selecting applicants for the public sectors in Oman (R10).

However, two recruiters reported that these are occasionally supplemented with other selection tests:



The unstructured interview is the basic method used. However, if an organisation suggests other selection procedures, we usually consider such requests, for example; written examination (R3).

Much has been written about the lack of validity of the unstructured interview (Dipboye, 1994; Barber, 1998; Parry, 1994). In the light of this, it is difficult to see how the exclusive use of this selection method can lead to the implementation of the merit-based selection system that is explicitly mandated in Omani Civil Law (1980).

#### **5.3.3.1 Training of Interviewers**

All but one ( $n = 9$ ) of the ministry recruiters thought that the interview training provided for members of the selection committee was inadequate:

There are training sessions organised occasionally for those who conduct the interviews. However, I really cannot tell you whether we have received enough training (R2).

Unfortunately, recruitment is not given that much attention in the public sector and I think you know the situation well. However, there is some training from time to time but not as much as there should be either in quality or quantity (R7).

One recruiter explained this lack of interview skills in the following way:

First, you have to understand that we do not have a standing recruitment committee and thus every time we have to recruit new personnel/teachers, the director General of Administration decides on people to represent the Ministry. Obviously, not all interviewers have received enough training and some of them have not received any at all (R4).

These accounts deviate significantly from the best practice of the literature, where the training of interviewers is considered to be an essential element in effective and fair R&S (Smith & Robertson, 1993; Cook, 1999). Moreover, respondents' accounts contradict the official ministry guidelines, which state that interviewers must be adequately trained (Ministry of Civil Service, 2003).

### **5.3.3.2 Types of Interview Questions**

In their responses to the question: “What type of interview questions do you ask job applicant during the interview?” All ten ministry recruiters indicated that they used unstructured open-ended questions to generate responses in order to rate the appropriateness of candidates for the job. General knowledge questions and intelligence questions were regularly used. However, job-related questions were only used if job experts were included in the membership of the hiring committee.

The questions asked are usually open-ended questions. We ask the candidates to provide explanations and examples. However, as I told you before, these questions are based on our general knowledge and not on job analysis. This is because job classification, job analysis and job descriptions are not used in all organisations which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Civil Service (R1).

Open-ended questions are asked. Moreover, most questions are about general knowledge. However, if there are persons in the committee who have experience related to the job, then job related questions are asked. This happens rarely, especially with the teacher hiring process since the recruitment committees are usually dominated by administrators (R3).

More than half ( $\underline{n} = 6$ ) of the ministry recruiters indicated that although there is no formal job analysis, schools often informally provide guidelines for the committee to consider when hiring new teachers. These guidelines tend to consist of minimum qualifications and experiences that an applicant should possess before being appointed.

These accounts contradict the data contained within the official documents, which state: questions asked during the selection interviews should vary between job-related questions and general knowledge; intellectual and questions related to the Omani context should be asked to all job candidates (Ministry of Civil Service, 2003).

### **5.3.3.3 The Conduct of Interview**

More than three quarters ( $\underline{n} = 8$ ) of the ministry recruiters described a standardised three stage interview process: the opening stage which aims to build up relationship, set the scene and to put the candidate at ease; the middle stage which is designed to collect and provide

information and the closing stage, which is designed to close the interview and confirm future action.

Our process is similar to any interview process. First, we start to prepare ourselves in the place and know our positions. Then, we start inviting candidates one by one. The interview can be divided into three parts. In the beginning, we try to make the candidate feel comfortable. Then, we start asking the questions and writing our notes. At the end, we allow the applicant to inquire and ask about issues that are related to the job (R7).

Usually, we try to put the interviewee at ease by starting to ask him/her simple question as a foundation for the real interview's questions. We also give the opportunity for the interviewee to ask job related questions in order to clear up any ambiguities (R1).

These procedures are consistent with what is emphasised in the best practice literature. Particularly the importance of having well-planned interview process (Graham & Bennett, 1998; Clement, 2000).

#### **5.3.3.4 Evaluation and decision making**

Informants were asked about the way in which the panel makes its decision on whether or not to hire particular candidates. Almost all ( $n = 9$ ) ministry recruiters indicated that selection decisions are usually made after each individual interview by calculating the simple average of the marks given by each interviewer.

At the end of the interview, we usually add up the marks given to the interviewee by each committee member and work out the average marks. The marks are distributed equally among four categories, which are: appearance; expression of speech; general knowledge and control and confidence. Finally, the names of candidates are sorted according to marks and the list is sent to the Minister of Civil Service for approval (R1).

Respondents' accounts indicate that the variables considered when evaluating the new teachers often appear only tangentially related to the performance of classroom teachers. Instead, they emphasise candidates' personal appearance, general rather than subject-related knowledge, and grades they obtained during their teacher training programme. Such practices contradict best practice and are likely to have a significantly negative effect on the reliability and objectivity of the selection process (Schmidt & Chan, 1998; Heraty &

Morely, 1998; Rynes & Cables, 2003). When probed, seven out of ten of the ministry recruiters justified their actions by referring to the absence of appropriate job descriptions or person specifications that would help them in determining the right person with the right characteristics for the job.

Since, we do not have the subject knowledge or knowledge of the skills required, most interview questions are not linked to the job. Thus, personal characteristics and accumulative grade point average are the main factors considered in R&S (R4).

There are no definite characteristics identified for us as recruiters, but we consider interpersonal characteristics such as, enthusiasm for teaching, verbal ability, general knowledge and academic achievement (R8).

Two-fifths ( $\underline{n} = 4$ ) of recruiters reported that the list of approved candidates which illustrates the names of applicants and the marks that are given to each candidate, is not only sent to the Minister of Civil Service for approval but frequently to the Minister, who, although having had no direct involvement in the interview process, modifies the list by altering marks given by the selection committee.

...The Minister often modifies the marks and a final list comes back to us with the final results (R3).

... Frequently, the list we send for approval comes back with changes where some names are omitted and others added instead (R5).

.....however, sometimes, the Minister makes changes to the list (R6).

This practice appears to be a clear breach of Oman's Basic Law (1996) and Article 15 of the Civil Law (1980) that declares merit as the fundamental basis for appointment. The accounts of informants are however consistent with the findings of Al Amery and Al Farsi (2004) who reported that in Oman, appointments are strongly oriented towards fulfilling personal interest, and that, some ministries in Oman could almost be defined by their 'tribal composition' (Peterson, 2004).

### **5.3.3.5 Medical Test**

Informants were unanimous in the view that without first passing a medical test, no potential candidate can be appointed to a teaching post in Oman. Thus, new teachers have to go through such procedures. Furthermore, all ten ministry recruiters indicated that the medical tests are simple and the potential employees are provided with forms that are designed for public hospitals to complete after conducting a medical examination.

Potential employees are given forms to be completed and stamped by any public hospital where they have a simple check-up including X-rays, blood and urine tests (R10).

After completing the interview, the selected candidates are sent to any public hospital for simple medical test such as X-rays, blood test, urine test etc (R8).

### **5.3.3.6 Background checks**

The Police and the Internal Security Units carry out background checks on candidates. However, three-fifths ( $n = 6$ ) of ministry recruiters interviewed indicated a degree of dissatisfaction with the current process.

Background checks are done by internal security and police. I think we need to reconsider such practices. There should be at least an initial background check by the organisation before the selection of new employees. This is not allowed now by law but I think such issues need to be resolved (R7).

This task is carried out by the police and by the internal security. However, I believe that this task is not effectively carried out, as we have witnessed many situations where new employees were dismissed because of misbehaviour or dishonesty (R3).

### **5.3.4 Theme four: Orientation and Socialisation Processes**

Almost all ( $n = 13$ ) head teachers and educational district officials reported that orientation programmes are organised for new teachers by the educational districts, and held in schools. A school district official said:

Yes, we do organise orientation sessions for the newly recruited teachers. These programmes include a meeting with the District Director General where they address teachers by welcoming and wishing them success in their new careers. New teachers also have the chance to discuss issues with district officials. In addition, there are orientation programmes held in individual schools for the newcomers and they are held by the schools individually or sometimes a number of schools organise shared programmes for their new teachers (O1).

However, just under half (47%) of these respondents complained that these programmes were not as professional as they should be, since they are not planned and most of them are conducted in the form of lectures.

Orientation is carried out in the schools and usually we organise a welcome meeting for the newcomers. The Director General also meets these teachers. In addition, there are some sessions in which we give new teachers ideas about the curriculum and timetabling. Though, they are mainly carried out orally, I think they are still useful (HD6).

The same proportion of informants strongly criticised the centralisation of authority and the interference of educational districts in most issues that are related to schools.

I do not think that the current orientation programmes are as useful as they could be. Although, those programmes are organised by schools, we have guidelines and rules imposed on us by school districts and thus we do not have the choice to create our own programmes (HD3).

In summary, the majority of head teachers felt that the orientation programmes were much less effective than they could or should be. Their views were largely inconsistent with the best practice literature in this area, which emphasises orientation as an essential factor following the selection process (Anderson et al. 1996; Wanous & Reichers, 2000). According to this literature, effective orientation programmes should provide new teachers with a sense of support and commitment (Wanous, 1992; Anderson et al. 1996), should focus on their needs and ensure that they become part of the learning community with a solid understanding of district and school goals, mission and culture (Wanous & Reichers, 2000), and where possible, should 'weed out' unsatisfactory teachers and improve the performance of those who are retained (Wise et al. 1987)

#### **5.3.4.1 Assignment of New Teachers to Classes**

More than two-thirds ( $n = 11$ ) of head teachers and educational district officials reported that new teachers were often assigned lower level classes or made 'floating teachers' in an attempt to make them feel comfortable and to build their confidence and love of the profession.

I usually assign new teachers to lower classes (year 3 or 4) to start with in order to assess their knowledge and skills. Sometimes, I do not assign them to certain classes but make them substitute teachers for a while until I make sure that they are acclimatised to the school culture and to the students (HD8).

We usually assign new teachers to the early years of classes, for example, year 7, and gradually let them teach higher-level classes. We try to assign them to the good classes in the school but it is really difficult for us to do so, as experienced teachers avoid difficult classes and leave them for the new teachers (HD4).

These findings are in agreement with the related literature which shows that assigning new teachers to the proper grade level will allow them to get their bearings as a first-time teacher (Huling-Austin, 1992; Davis & Bloom, 1998; DePaul, 2000). Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the findings of the analysis of the questionnaires in investigating the views of recently appointed teachers (see section 6.6) which indicates a degree of satisfaction among respondents regarding the classes they were assigned to in their first days in schools.

However, four respondents reported that equal opportunities policy is strictly adopted in assigning teachers to classes:

New teachers are assigned to different levels of classes and thus distribution of classes between teachers is free from bias and favouritism (HD9).

These responses may reflect limited understanding on the part of the surveyed respondents of the fact that novice teachers are very much in need of help, guidance and the classes that go with their grade level in order to ease their transition into the profession and to improve their first years on the job. These responses might be a further manifestation of the bureaucratic tendencies that are reported to underlie the work culture of Omani public and

shape the actions of civil servants. Whatever the reasons, research shows that novice teachers face a lot of problems, including pressures to adjust to the new job's demands and the shock of encountering the day-to-day realities of teaching practice; and that, novice teachers who are not provided with adequate support systems during their first few years in post often respond by leaving the profession altogether (Weiss & Weiss, 1999; Johnson & Kardos, 2002; Doerger, 2003).

#### **5.3.4.2 Assignment of Mentors and Socialisation**

The widespread consensus ( $n = 14$ ) amongst head teachers and school district officials was that it is left to schools to manage the socialisation of the new teachers and that schools often assign responsibility for this to subject heads.

Again this task is left for schools to decide on. However, as far as I know schools have their way of providing support to new teachers including the assignment of mentors (O5).

... There are subject heads and the permanent inspectors who try to help new teachers with their teaching (HD7).

The ad hoc provision of mentors deviates markedly from the recommendations of the best practice literature in which well-administered mentor programmes that foster regular meetings between new teachers and their senior colleagues are presented as being vitally important for first-year teachers (Veen et al., 2001).

From, the respondents' answers, it appears that little attention is paid to administrative support for the new teachers in their first days in post. More than two-thirds ( $n = 11$ ) of head teachers and school district informants attribute this deficit to custom and practice within the administrative systems.

We try our best to help the new teachers adapt and we always urge the head teachers to give special attention to the newly recruited teachers. However, I readily admit that such issues are not given much attention. Because, this is the way things have been done historically, however, I really approve of what you have just mentioned (O2).



...we do try to socialise the new teacher into the school environment by meeting them and explaining the rules and regulations and discussing their ideas and opinions (HD10).

About one-third of interviewees ( $\underline{n} = 4$ ) attribute this to lack of head teachers' knowledge about the significance of such issues in the professional life of the new teachers, and advocate training as a remedy for this:

...however, I think such important issues should be given more attention by providing head teachers with regular training and professional development programmes (HD5).

Indeed, head teachers shoulder a great responsibility in the orientation, socialisation and professional development of their teaching staff. Thus, they must continue to grow over their entire lifetime if they want to maintain an active role in developing their schools. This implies that head teachers' training must be considered crucial and central issue. In this regard, Esp (1983, p.3) argues that there are two assumptions behind the establishment of training courses for head teachers and senior staff. The first is that school leadership can no longer be exercised on the basis of experience and natural ability. The second is that school head needs to be trained in the skills of team leadership and the various pressures on heads arising from demands for participation; consultation and accountability.

#### **5.3.4.3 The Use of Job Descriptions in Schools**

All fifteen head teachers and district officials reported that teachers are not provided with formal job descriptions. They argue that the Ministry of Civil Service, the organisation in charge of all civilian employees, does not use job descriptions or person specifications, and thus these cannot be unilaterally implemented in schools, although approximately three quarters ( $\underline{n} = 11$ ) of these respondents were strongly in favour of their adoption:

No, because none of the public sector uses job descriptions or job classifications and neither do schools. And if such important changes are to be implemented, which I am in favour of, it has to come from the Ministry of Civil Service, as all civilian issues are centralised (HD4).

Nevertheless, the best practice advocates that as a minimum, job descriptions should be written for each post in the organisation. They can help to clarify the duties, responsibilities and other job demands of employees. They also help to identify the skills, abilities and experiences that candidates need to possess in order to perform satisfactorily in the role (Torrington & Hall; 1998; Guion, 1998).

#### **5.3.4.4 The Use of Incentives for New Teachers**

Informants were asked about the use of incentives to retain new teachers. Four-fifths ( $n = 12$ ) of head teachers and school district officials reported that head teachers were forbidden from using any type of extrinsic rewards, especially financial benefits.

If you are talking about rewarding new teachers by promotion or an increase in salary then this does not exist in Oman because we have a centralised and bureaucratic system where we have to consult the Ministry in every step we take, and get their authorisation to do anything. The Ministry of Education itself has to write to the Ministry of Civil Service to get their agreement, too (HD6).

Yes, there are incentives used to encourage those distinguished teachers but we cannot do more than provide a letter of appreciation or a simple present as centralisation is forced upon us and thus we have very little freedom to go further (HD9).

Teachers, as with any other civilian employees, are promoted on the basis of the length of service and not on the basis of annual performance reports. In other words, the chance of promotion is equal for all employees and is completely disconnected from evaluation of job performance.

The accounts of respondents, although consistent with ministry guidance, are at variance with the best practice in the literature, which identifies the use of effective performance management strategies and the provision of incentives as essential in attracting, socialising and retaining capable employees (Wilkins, 1998; Odden, 2002; Zottoli & Wanous, 2000).

However, three respondents did provide examples of outstanding teachers being rewarded with monetary and non-monetary incentives. Furthermore, it appears that these incentives are often facilitated through the involvement or agency of the teacher-parent associations:

Schools do use of monetary and non-monetary incentives to praise the distinguished teachers and this is done with the participation of teacher-parent associations (HD6).

...actually, mechanisms of accountability and incentives have been gradually introduced (HD13).

#### **5.3.4.5 The Stakeholders' Overall Satisfaction with the R&S Practices**

More than three quarters ( $\underline{n} = 20$ ) of the sample of 25 stakeholders interviewed expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the overall R&S system. However, the ministry recruiters who are directly involved with the process were generally less critical of its outcomes than the head teachers and district officials who see themselves as on the receiving end of the decisions made by the selection committees:

I am satisfied as we proudly manage to hire hundreds or even more than a thousand of teachers for our schools every year and we do not receive many complaints of hiring process mistakes. If those teachers are poor in their teaching, it is not related to the recruitment and selection process but it might be due to other professional issues (R8).

Well, as an occasional member of the teacher R&S committee, I rather leave it to the others to say what they think. However, I feel we are in need of a policy that ensures a global approach to teacher R&S as, I feel that we are not as effective as we should and could be (R5).

To tell the truth, I am not happy with the way teachers are recruited for our schools. As far as I know there is no written R&S policy applied to the public sector as a whole and teacher R&S in particular. For a better understanding of this issue, I advise you to interview some top ranking officials from the Ministry of Civil Service. (HD3)

To be frank with you, it seems that any person who applies to teach in our schools and has a degree in education can get a job. In reality, there is no true selection process. Since, recruiters do not have any background in the subject that person teaches or the culture and environment of schools, how can they assess someone for the teaching profession? (O4).

I have no comment because there is no written R&S policy. It is the people in the Ministry of Civil Service who decide on such issues. Unfortunately, we are far behind the world in such matters. We do not even have job classification or job analysis for the public sector employees who now number more than 95,000 (HD6).

#### **5.3.4.6 Suggestions to Improve the R&S Process**

Twenty three out of twenty five of participants (92%) provided suggestions about how to improve the existing system for recruiting and selecting teachers:

To improve the R&S process, I suggest that there should be a clear written policy on how to recruit and select personnel for the Civil Service sector as a whole and not only education. As you understand there are no stable and reliable procedures followed in R&S at present and thus the outcomes of such process are not consistent (R4).

Well, many proposals can be suggested. However, I think we need to have formal job descriptions and person specifications for every post. We also need more training and more authority in taking the hiring decision (R1).

In contrast with the general points made by ministry recruiters, educational district officials and head teachers provided much clearer and more detailed suggestions. For example:

First of all I recommend decentralising the R&S process. Secondly, there should be a clear written R&S policy. Thirdly, there should job classifications and job descriptions. Fourthly, recruiters should be educators or have teaching experience. Fifthly, recruiters should be well trained in conducting interviews (HD1).

Many improvements are needed to increase the effectiveness of current teacher R&S. These include: 1) the establishment of a clearly written R&S policy, 2) decentralisation of R&S (each districts should recruit for its own schools), 3) decentralisation of the interview process to each educational region. This would help to put those applicants at ease and would help to encourage others to apply.4), the interviewers must be well trained in conducting interviews.6), orientation sessions must be more efficient and better organised (HD6).

.... First, additional selection methods should be included such as written tests. Second, the Ministry's website should be more attractive and include more information about schools and classrooms. Third, interviews should be carried out by people who are familiar with the teaching profession. Fourth, medical tests should be more intensive and well-organised as schools have experienced some health problems with the newly hired teachers. Fifth, extensive background checks are important. Sixth, teachers should be well treated by all personnel either in school districts or the Ministry as the present situation is not as good as it should be (HD9).

.....fifth, teachers must be developed professionally. We should make teachers feel that they are no less important than their colleagues in other public sectors. This can contribute to enhancing their job satisfaction. Sixth, teachers should be promoted with a salary increase equal to other public sectors employees (HD2).

...schools should be given the opportunity to participate in decision making and communication with other schools and school districts. They could then share experiences and expertise in terms of teacher R&S and orientation (HD3).

Overall, these responses suggest that these stakeholders see teacher R&S as critical to the success of the overall educational system in Oman. They do not believe that the current policies and practices are as effective as they both could and should be.

#### **5.4 Summary**

Accounts contained in official documents and reported by the surveyed R&S personnel, head teachers and educational district officials during interviews indicate that the rhetoric and practice of teacher R&S in Oman deviates significantly from the best practice found in a review of related HRM literature. Most notably:

- The absence of a formal, explicit, comprehensive and integrated set of R&S policies.
- Centralisation of the system to the point where school representation is almost non-existent.
- Data collection instruments, interview processes and decision-making criteria were often unrelated to the requirements of the post.
- Interviewers lacked subject knowledge, practical teaching experiences and interview skills.
- The systems in use were subject to bias and outside interference to the point that they could not be deemed to be unequivocally fair and/or legal.
- Orientation and socialisation of new teachers was not consistently implemented.
- Head teachers and administrators perceived appraisal and reward systems to be ineffective at best, and at worst counter-productive.

Further examination of these issues is undertaken in chapter seven (Discussion of results) where they are considered in conjunction with the broader findings of the thesis.

## **CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the questionnaire data. It is divided into four sections. The first describes key demographic characteristics of the sample. The second outlines recruitment procedures and the respondents' perceptions of the recruitment process. The third summarises selection procedures and the respondents' perceptions of the selection process. The fourth covers the orientation and socialisation programmes organised for the newly recruited teachers. Each section summarises the quantitative survey data and also presents, where applicable, the answers from the open-ended questions, which focused on the respondents' suggestions for improvement. The chapter investigates the research questions presented in Chapter four. More specifically, it seeks to:

- Determine and analyse the current practices used to recruit and select new teachers in Oman as experienced by those subjected to the process.
- Explore teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher recruitment, selection and orientation.
- Examine the degree to which these perceptions correspond with the accounts of other stakeholders.
- Solicit teachers' views on how teacher recruitment and selection can be improved

To achieve this, several measures of descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were calculated and the resulting data displayed in a series of tables and charts. In addition, the results of T-tests, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests, were employed to explore differences between the opinions offered by the demographic categories.

## 6.2 Analysis of Demographic Information

This section summarises the characteristics of the sample for the following demographic factors: gender, qualifications, year of appointment and teaching level. The effects of these variables on teachers' perceptions, opinions and attitudes were confirmed through the analysis of a number of variables:

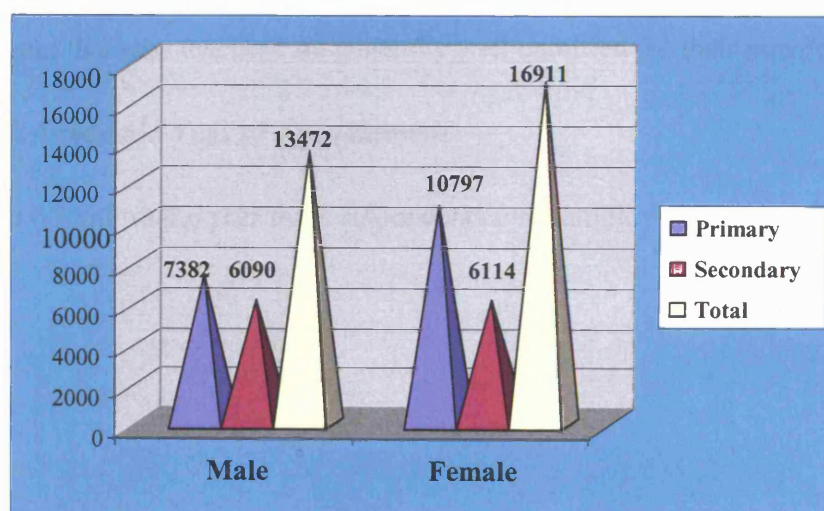
### a) Gender

**Table 6.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	224	45.2
Female	272	54.8
Total	496	100

Table 6.1 represents the gender of the respondents. It can be observed that of the total of 496 respondents, 54.8% were females and 45.2% were males. The gender split of the sample matches the proportions found in the overall population of teachers in Oman's schools (Ministry of Education, 2003), as can be seen in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1: Distribution of Teachers by Gender and Teaching Force Level 2002-2003**



Further analysis shows that there are more female than male teachers in primary schools. A finding that is consonant with the new educational policy in Oman which, as discussed in Chapter two, now excludes new male teachers at primary level for religious and cultural reasons. The gender split of the sample of teachers analysed in this study, (40% male and 60% female), corresponds closely with the figures for the whole of the workforce teaching in Oman's public schools. This close correspondence indicates that the sample analysed here is highly representative and that any findings can be generalised to the whole population with a correspondingly high degree of confidence.

### **b) Qualifications**

The following table shows the qualifications of the respondents.

**Table 6.2: Distribution of Respondents by Qualifications**

Qualification	Male	Female	Total (No)	Total (%)
Master	13	18	30	6.0
Degree	187	225	412	83.1
Diploma	20	26	46	9.3
Total	219	268	488	98.4

In the survey of 496 respondents, 488 answered the question on their teaching qualification, 6.0% had a Masters Degree (in Education), 83.1% of the respondents had a Bachelors Degree (in Education) and 9.3% had a two-year Diploma (in Education). From this, it is apparent that new teachers are generally well qualified for their new teaching appointments.

### **c) Academic Year of Appointment**

Table 6.3 shows the year these respondents were employed.



**Table 6.3: Distribution of Respondents by Year of Appointment**

Year of appointment	Number	Percentage
2000	162	32.7
2001	159	32.1
2002	169	34.1
Total	490	98.8

All respondents were hired between 2000 and 2002 and were thus recently appointed as teachers. Out of 490 respondents who answered this question, 32.7% were hired in 2000, 32.1% in 2001, and 34.1% in 2002 with 1.2% representing the missing data. The survey was conducted in the school year 2002/2003. Teachers recruited in the year 2003 were not included in the survey as teacher selection and allocation takes place between May and September.

#### **d) Educational Districts**

Respondents were drawn from three educational districts (see Table 6.4): Muscat, Interior and Musandam.

**Table 6.4: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Districts**

Educational District	Male	Female	Total (No)	Total (%)
Muscat	89	108	197	39.7
Interior	89	109	198	39.9
Musandam	42	55	97	19.6
Total	220	272	492	99.2

Of the 492 respondents, 39.7% were from Muscat, 39.9% were from Interior and 19.6% were from Musandam. This distribution of respondents reflects the population distribution in Oman, as well as the actual numbers of schools, teachers and students in those districts, as shown in the statistics published by the Ministry of Education (See Chapter four).

### **6.3 Career Choice**

The survey investigated the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic factors in the teachers' choice of career. Table 6.5 presents respondents' answers to the question "Why did you apply for the job?"

**Table 6.5: Reasons for Applying for the Job**

Statement	Male	Female	Total	%
It is a job I like	80	73	153	31.1
It was the only job available	75	74	149	30.3
The long holiday	38	32	70	14.2
Teaching allowances	23	13	36	7.3
The most suitable job for women	NA	72	72	14.6
My parents' choice	2	7	9	1.8
Not sure	3	0	3	0.6
Total	221	271	492	99.2

NA = Not applicable % = Percentage

The results indicate that around a third of the respondents (31.1%) had chosen the job because of their interest in the job itself; just about a similar number (30.3%) had chosen teaching as a career because it was the only job available and (14.2%) reported that they had chosen teaching because of the long holidays teachers get. 72 female teachers (i.e. 26.4% of the total sample of women) had chosen teaching because it is considered as the most suitable job for a woman in Omani society.

This implies that traditional and religious factors as well as tribal values that prohibit the mixing of men and women in the work place may still play a significant role in these women's choice of profession. However, the overall results indicate that teaching is mainly chosen for extrinsic reasons.

#### **6.4 Teachers' Perceptions and Beliefs of the Recruitment Process.**

Respondents were asked to rate pre-coded recruitment activities in terms of their effectiveness. The rating was based on a 5-point rating scale (Likert scale) ranging from 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. However, the first question requested the respondents to select the choice that applies to their situation. The survey results are summarised in the following sub-sections.

#### 6.4.1 The Most Popular Advertisement Method

The most frequently cited job advertisement methods by which respondents initially found out about a teaching vacancy are summarised in Table 6.6:

**Table 6.6: The Most Popular Advertisement Methods Reported by Respondents**

Method of Advertisement	Total (No)	Total (%)
Television	50	10.1
Radio	55	11.1
Newspaper	325	66.5
Magazine	35	7.1
Other sources	27	5.4

No = Number % = Percentage

Of 488 respondents, the majority (66.2%) found out about the job vacancy through newspaper advertisements, while the rest found the information through radio (11.3%), television (9.8%), magazine (7.3%) and other sources (5.5%). Thus newspapers appear to be the most effective medium for job advertisement in Oman.

#### 6.4.2 The Effectiveness of the Advertisement

This sub-section examines the results of six of questions posed on the effectiveness of the job advertisement. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6.7.

**Table 6.7: Analysis of Job Advertisement's Effectiveness**

Item No	Survey question/statement	SDis 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	Total %	M	SD
2.3	The job advertisement was attractive	139	133	72	82	70	496	2.61	1.406
		28.0	26.8	14.5	16.5	14.1	100.0		
2.4	The advertisement conveyed enough information about the job	117	140	64	110	63	494	2.72	1.374
		23.6	28.2	12.9	22.2	12.7	99.6		
2.5	The advertisement did not contain clear instructions about the application process	61	90	55	125	165	496	2.59	1.360
		12.3	18.1	11.1	33.3	25.2	100.0		
2.6	The Ministry of Education website was easy to access	123	161	55	77	80	496	2.65	1.415
		20.0	17.1	11.7	29.4	21.8	100.0		
2.7	The Web Site provided me with most of the information I needed to know about the job	148	128	55	88	76	496	2.62	1.453
		29.8	25.8	11.1	17.7	15.3	99.8		
2.8	I was generally well treated during my telephone call to inquire about the job	141	100	62	114	76	493	2.76	1.464
		28.4	20.2	12.5	23.0	15.4	99.4		

No = Number. % = Percentage. SDis = Strongly Disagree. D = Disagree. N = Neutral. A = Agree. SA = Strongly Agree. M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation

As illustrated in Table 6.7 above, 30.6% of the sample, were satisfied with the attractiveness of the advertisement, including 14.1% of the respondents who strongly agreed and 16.5% who agreed with the statement “The job advertisement was attractive”, while the majority ( $28 + 26.8 = 54.8\%$ ), appeared to be dissatisfied, with the rest (14.5%) expressing a neutral attitude. About a third of the respondents ( $22.2 + 12.7 = 34.9\%$ ), agreed that the advertisement conveyed sufficient information about the job, while more than the half of respondents ( $23.6 + 28.2 = 51.8\%$ ) did not find the information sufficient.

Most of the respondents were also dissatisfied with the clarity of the instructions about the application process provided in the advertisement. The survey results show that 58.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement “The advertisement did not contain clear instructions about the application process”, while only 30.4% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, with the remainder (11.1%) being neutral. The findings are in tune with data obtained from documents and interviews (see 5.2.3 and 5.3.2.1), which shows that only basic information about the job vacancy is provided in the job advertisement.

With regard to the Ministry of Education website, which provides information about vacancies, the respondents were asked for their opinion about the ease of access to the site and the amount of information provided (see Table 6.7). A slight majority of the respondents (51.2%) reported that the site was easy to access; over a third (37.1%) reported that they did not find it easy, while only a tenth (11.7%) were neutral.

In order to check for differences between districts in regard to ease of access to the Ministry of Education website, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied. The results are presented in Table 6.8.

**Table 6.8: ANOVA Results for the Effect of Educational Districts on Accessing Ministry of Education's Website.**

Source of Variation	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	2	33.823	16.911	8.734	0.000
Within groups	489	946.811	1.936		

F = Degree of freedom      Sig: Significance level

The p-value is 0.000, which means that there are statistical differences between educational districts in ease of access to the Ministry of Education's website at a significance level of 0.05

To identify more clearly the differences between educational regions, Bonferroni's test was carried out. The results of this test for each educational district are shown in Table 6.9.

**Table 6.9: Bonferroni's Test for Accessing Website for Educational Districts**

(I)Educational regions	(J)Educational regions	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Muscat	Interior	.3684*	.026
	Musandum	.6967*	.000
Interior	Muscat	-.3684*	.026
	Musandum	.3283	.173
Musandum	Muscat	-.6967*	.000
	Interior	-.3283	.173

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed significant differences in the ease of access to the Ministry's website between Muscat and Interior ( $p=0.026$ ), between Muscat and Musandum ( $p=0.000$ ), between Interior and Muscat ( $p=0.026$ ) and between Musandum and

Muscat ( $p=0.00$ ). Thus, these results indicate that job applicants in Muscat find it easier to access the website (and probably the Internet) than those in Interior or Musandam.

A possible explanation for this is the concentration of business activities in Muscat region (e.g. ports, tourism, business and service centres) that promotes a better economic environment for citizens living in this region (Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Annual Report, 2002). Thus, prevalent life styles (high standard of living) in Muscat region may contribute to better chances for people in this region in terms of accessing the Internet at their work places, homes and the Internet cafes.

In addition, Oman has a rugged terrain in many parts, including isolated islands, marsh areas, deserts and the long mountain chain with peaks that rise to over ten thousand feet (Ministry of Information, 2000). These topographical difficulties mean that Internet services are not yet available in large parts of the country (Al Ismaili, 2002) and this may account in part for the regional differences found in the data set.

All these factors may contribute in limiting the number of potential candidates from applying to the teaching posts and thus influence the overall R&S outcomes.

The results in Table 6.7 also indicate that the majority of the respondents (55.6%) were dissatisfied with the information provided on the website while a third (33.0%) were satisfied, and about one tenth (11.1%) were neutral. Finally, the survey evaluated the way respondents were treated by the receptionists when they first phoned to inquire about the advertised job. About half (48.6%) of respondents reported that they were not generally well treated.

Overall, it appears that, on average, respondents found that the advertisement process less than satisfactory with an overall mean of 2.66 which is slightly less than the neutral mean of 3.00, .

### 6.4.3 Application Form

This sub-section evaluates questions related to the application form, namely: ease of obtaining it; the structure of the application form; perceived appropriateness of the information requested in the application form and ease with which the completed form could be delivered back to the Ministry. The survey results are summarised in Table 6.10.

**Table 6.10: Distribution of the Application Form Questions (Frequencies and Percentages)**

Item No	Survey question/statement	SDis 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	No/ %	M	SD
2.9	It was not easy for me to obtain the application form	107	144	45	85	115	496	2.91	1.499
		21.6	29.0	9.1	17.1	23.2	100.0		
2.10	The application form was structured in away that encouraged me to complete	142	105	64	110	75	496	2.73	1.456
		28.6	21.2	12.9	22.2	15.1	100.0		
2.11	The application form asked for most of the information I wanted to include	157	108	55	99	75	494	2.64	1.476
		31.7	21.8	11.1	20.0	15.1	99.6		
2.12	It was not easy for me to return the application form	91	121	67	116	101	496	2.96	1.424
		18.3	24.4	13.5	23.4	20.4	100.0		

No = Number S. Dis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = strongly agree  
M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

200 of the respondents (40.3%) reported that they had difficulties in obtaining an application form. To test if there were any significant differences between genders, a T-test was applied to the collected data. The T-test results, in Table 6.11 below, show that there were significant differences between male and female teachers in their responses in relation to their genders ( $t=-2.46$ ;  $p=.014$ ). This suggests that female teachers found it more difficult to obtain the job application form.

**Table 6.11: The Independent Sample T-test Comparing the Difficulties in Obtaining Application Form Scores for Gender**

Item	Male			Female			t-test	df	P
	N	M	S.D	N	M	SD			
It was not easy for me to obtain the application form	224	2.75	1.476	272	3.08	1.503	-2.46	494	.014

N = Number M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

Further analysis showed significant differences between teachers in their responses in relation to their educational districts with a p Value of 0.003 (see Table 6.12).

**Table 6.12: ANOVA Results for the Effects of Educational Districts in Obtaining the Application Form.**

Source of Variation	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	2	25.366	12.668	5.732	.003
Within groups	489	1080.729	2.210		
Total	491	1106.065			

To ascertain the location of these differences, Bonferroni's test was carried out. The results of this test for each of the three educational districts are presented in Table 6.13.

**Table 6.13: Bonferroni's Test for Obtaining the Application Form for Educational Districts**

(I)Educational regions	(J)Educational regions	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Muscat	Interior	.4855*	.004
	Musandam	8.059E-02	1.000
Interior	Muscat	-.4855*	.004
	Musandam	-.4049	.085
Musandam	Muscat	-8.0590E-02	1.000
	Interior	.4049	.085

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The results showed that these reported difficulties were statistically significantly lower for applicants living in Muscat with a p Value of 0.004 and significantly higher for applicants living in Interior and Musandam.

The findings suggest that the demographical distribution of school districts together with the nature of Omani society in terms of traditions, religion and tribal values may influence the overall outcomes of teacher R&S. There may therefore be excellent potential applicants who are not being presented with the opportunity to join the teaching profession.

Furthermore, the results in Table 6.10 reveal that nearly half of all respondents (49.8%) were dissatisfied with the structure of the application form and just over half (53.5%) thought that the application form included requests for irrelevant information. Answers to the final question in this section, "It was easy for me to return the application form" yielded an equal distribution between agreement (212) and disagreement (217) responses.



Taken as a whole, the results for this sub-group of variables indicate an overall mean of 2.81 which is close to the neutral mean score of 3.00, indicating that in general respondents did not strongly hold either positive or negative opinions about the effectiveness of the application form.

#### 6.4.4 Screening Process

The majority of applicants 52.2% (22.8+ 29.4) reported that they were not invited for a screening interview prior to the selection process. More than half of them 55.4% (26.0 +29.4) stated that they did not receive feedback on the selection process (see Table 6.14). These findings are in agreement with the data obtained from stakeholder interviews (See 5.3.2.3) which reported that screening interviews are the exception rather than the norm, and that suitably qualified candidates are invited to attend final selection interviews via advertisements placed in the local mass media.

Furthermore, the overall mean for the two variables was 2.65, which is slightly less than the neutral mean of 3.0. This implies that respondents showed low satisfaction with this phase of the recruitment process.

**Table 6.14: Distribution of Responses to Screening Process Questions**

Item No	Survey question/statement	SDis	D	N	A	SA	Total %	M	SD
2.13	I was not called for a formal initial interview (screening interview) prior to the selection interview.	79	90	68	146	113	406	2.75	1.402
		15.9	18.1	13.7	29.4	22.8	100.0		
2.14	I received official feedback regarding my status of being selected for the subsequent selection process	146	129	83	74	62	494	2.54	1.376
		29.4	26.0	16.7	14.9	12.5	99.6		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

#### 6.4.5 Open-ended Questions about the Recruitment Process

Respondents were asked if they agree with the use of CVs and job references as recruitment devices and to justify their answers. They were also invited to make suggestions for improving the present recruitment process.

Analysis of these open-ended questions (See Appendix D) supports a number of conclusions. Almost two-thirds (61%) of respondents were in favour of including CVs as a tool to help recruiters get more information about the suitability of an applicant. Whereas, just over one third, (36.1%) of respondents were against the inclusion of CVs, describing them as unreliable and easy to prepare with the aid of professional agencies. More than two-thirds (65.1%) of respondents supported the inclusion of job references, arguing that these would provide the organisation with different opinions about the applicant and their potential ability to perform in the post. Just under a third (29.8%) of respondents said “No” to the use of references, with many indicating that they thought that they would only introduce further bias into the existing system. Respondents proposed several ways in which they thought the teacher recruitment process could be improved. These included improving the image of teaching as a potential career; making job advertisements more informative and appealing, and; improving the effectiveness of the short-listing procedure by contacting each candidate personally.

#### **6.4.6 Summary of the Recruitment Process**

- Respondents’ perceptions of the recruitment process can be summarised as:
- The respondents had broadly negative perceptions of the present recruitment practices used by the Ministry of Education in Oman
- Gender had no statistically significant effects on the respondents’ perceptions (except for the ease with which application forms were obtained by candidates).
- There were significant differences between educational districts in regard to the ease in accessing the Ministry of Education’s website and obtaining application forms.
- More than half of all respondents were not sent notification letters to invite them for a selection interview
- The majority of respondents would welcome the inclusion of CVs and job references as additional devices for teacher R&S
- Overall, the recruitment process fell short of respondents’ expectations

## 6.5 Teachers' Perceptions and Beliefs of the Selection Process

Section three of the questionnaire investigated teachers' perceptions of, and beliefs about, the selection process. This part consisted of 29 questions clustered around eight dimensions that represent the standard selection process described by the best practice literature reviewed in chapter three. These dimensions are: the general atmosphere prior to commencement of the interview; the general atmosphere during interview process; the types of interview question asked; the selection committee, the effectiveness of the interviewers; medical screening, final selection results and the responses to the open-ended questions. .

### 6.5.1 General Atmosphere Prior to Commencement of Interview

This dimension consists of two questions, the results for which are shown in Table 6.15. Just over half of all respondents (51.6%) claimed that they had been given insufficient notice to attend a selection interview. More than a third (37.3%) felt that they had not been interviewed on or around the appointed time with a mean score of 3.08 (just above mid point).

**Table 6.15: General Atmosphere Prior to Commencement of Interview**

Item No	Survey question/statement	SDis	D	N	A	SA	No/%	M	SD
3.1	I was not notified about the interview in sufficient time	84	103	51	107	149	494	2.72	1.497
		16.9	20.8	10.3	21.6	30.0	99.6		
3.2	I was interviewed on/around the time appointed for me	107	78	70	147	94	496	3.08	1.439
		21.6	15.7	14.1	29.6	19.0	100.0		

No = Number      % = Percentage      SDis = Strongly Disagree      D = Disagree      N = Neutral      A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree      M = Mean      SD = Standard Deviation

### 6.5.2 General Atmosphere during the Interview

This dimension consists of four questions. The distribution of teachers' responses to these (frequency and percentages) is shown in Table 6.16.

**Table 6.16: General Atmosphere During the Interview Process**

Item No	Survey statement/question	SDis	D	N	A	SA	Total %	M	SD
3.3	The general atmosphere in the interview room was satisfactory	123	143	54	109	65	494	2.69	1.394
		24.8	28.8	10.9	22.0	13.1	99.6		
3.4	The interviewers started the interview by asking general questions	109	107	79	141	58	494	2.86	1.356
		22.0	21.6	15.9	28.4	11.7	99.6		
3.5	I felt comfortable during the interview	129	107	54	110	94	494	2.86	1.493
		26.0	21.6	10.9	22.2	19.0	99.6		
3.6	I was prompted and given clarification when I required it in the interview	124	115	63	117	74	493	2.80	1.429
		25.0	23.2	12.7	23.6	14.9	99.4		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree  
M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

The results show that 53.6% of respondents were dissatisfied with the general atmosphere during the selection interview. Two fifths (43.6%) of respondents disagreed with the statement “The interviewers started the interview by asking general questions”. Almost half (47.6%) reported that they did not feel comfortable during the interview. About half of all respondents reported that the interviewers prompted them or provided clues during the interview. The literature review indicates that gender is one factor that often influences prompts and clues during selection interviews. In order to find out if there was any statistically significant relationship between the gender of the respondent and the extent to which they were helped by the interviewer, a T-test performed (See Table 6.17).

**Table 6.17: The Independent Sample T-test Scores for Gender**

Item	Male			Female			T test	df	p
	N	M	S.D	N	M	S.D			
I was prompted and given clues	224	2.82	1.450	272	2.78	1.405	.269	494	.788

N = Number M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

The result of the T-test was ( $p=.788$ ) and, therefore, the result did not indicate a significant difference in the pattern of responses between male and female candidates.

Taken as one group, the surveyed teachers had low perceptions of the general atmosphere during the interview process with an overall mean of 2.80 out of 5.00.

### 6.5.3 Types of Interview Questions

This dimension consists of 11 questions. Overall analysis was carried out by computing the mean and standard deviation for each item. The mean and standard deviation scores are based on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, in which a score of '1' represents strong disagreement with the item, a score of '3' indicates a neutral orientation towards the question, and a score of '5' indicates strong agreement with the content of the item. The distribution of teachers' responses to these questions (including means, frequencies, and percentages) are shown in table 6.18:

**Table 6. 18: The Distributions of Types of Interview Questions Including (Frequencies Percentages and Means)**

Item No	Statement	SDis 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 4	No/ %	M	SD
3.7	The interview questions were generally within the level of my knowledge	128	141	65	79	80	493	2.67	1.426
		25.8	28.4	13.1	15.9	16.1	99.4		
3.8	I was asked intellectual questions	153	124	48	91	75	491	2.61	1.466
		30.8	25.0	9.7	18.3	15.1	99.0		
3.9	I was asked questions about my natural aptitudes	146	131	53	87	79	496	2.64	1.459
		29.4	26.4	10.7	17.5	15.9	100.0		
3.10	I was evaluated in different types of teaching skills	133	123	63	98	77	494	2.72	1.440
		26.8	24.8	12.7	19.8	15.5	99.6		
3.11	I was asked what motivated me to become a teacher	143	136	62	79	73	493	2.60	1.425
		28.8	27.4	12.6	15.9	14.7	99.4		
3.12	I was not asked questions about my experience in teaching	158	106	40	113	77	494	2.68	1.500
		31.9	21.4	8.1	22.8	15.5	99.6		
3.13	I was asked questions about my knowledge in my subject	161	126	61	88	60	496	2.51	1.408
		32.5	25.4	12.3	17.7	12.1	100.0		
3.14	I was asked to describe the key elements in conducting a lesson	159	140	35	92	70	496	2.54	1.453
		32.1	28.2	7.1	18.5	14.1	100.0		
3.15	I was asked to give a practical teaching lesson	146	114	88	72	75	496	2.62	1.423
		29.4	23.0	17.7	14.5	15.1	99.8		
3.16	I was asked how I could help my students to develop their study skills	123	161	61	70	81	496	2.57	1.469
		24.8	32.5	12.3	14.1	16.3	100.0		
3.17	I was asked how to handle discipline problems	100	180	50	101	65	496	2.69	1.345
		20.2	36.3	10.1	20.4	13.1	100.0		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

The overall mean for the types of questions asked by interviewers during the selection process was 2.62. The highest mean rating for these factors "I was evaluated in different types of teaching skills" was 2.72. The second highest mean rating was in response to the

statement “I was asked how to handle discipline problems” (2.69). The lowest mean ratings were the following items: “I was asked questions about my knowledge in my subject” (2.51), and; “I was asked to describe the key elements in conducting a lesson” (2.54). These results indicate that a lack of consistency amongst the interviewers, which resulted in individuals being treated differently during their selection interviews. Any variability in the treatment of candidates not only has significant implications for the validity and reliability of the selection interview, but may also mean that the process fails to meet the mandatory legal standards governing fairness and equality of opportunity. The results are indeed very disappointing for a system that declares merit as the basis for filling public posts (Civil Service Act, 1980).

#### 6.5.4 The Selection Committee

This dimension consists of two questions and the results of the analysis, including frequencies and percentages, are shown in Table 6.19:

**Table 6.19: The Distribution of Responses to Interview Panel Statements Including (Frequencies Percentages and Means)**

Item No	Statement	SDis	D	N	A	SA	Total %	M	SD
3.18	The interview panel included teacher educators beside the administrators	164	112	63	97	58	494	2.54	1.419
		33.1	22.6	12.7	19.6	11.7	99.6		
3.19	The interview panel included school personnel beside the administrators	176	104	54	103	56	493	2.51	1.437
		35.5	21.0	10.9	20.8	11.3	99.4		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

Just over half (55.7%) of the respondents reported that the interview panel did not include teacher educators, and a similar number (56.5%) reported that the panel interviewing them did not include any school personnel. These findings confirm those from the stakeholder interviews reported in chapter five, namely that non-Ministry personnel are rarely included in interview panels and thus have little opportunity to influence teacher selection.

#### 6.5.5 Candidates' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Interviewers

The fifth dimension consists of four questions. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 6.20:

**Table 6.20: The Distribution of Responses to Interviewers' effectiveness Statements Including (Frequencies Percentages and Means)**

Item No	Statement	SDis	D	N	A	SA	Total %	M	SD
3.20	The interviewers were friendly	110	74	53	163	96	496	3.12	1.458
		22.2	14.9	10.7	32.9	19.4	100.0		
3.21	The interviewers conducted the interview well	180	103	50	83	79	495	2.55	1.507
		36.3	20.8	10.1	16.7	15.9	99.8		
3.22	I was not given the opportunity to enquire about issues related to the job	87	111	53	93	152	496	2.77	1.514
		17.5	22.4	10.7	18.8	30.6	100.0		
3.23	At the end of the interview I was briefed on the tasks and responsibilities involved in the job	145	110	63	93	84	495	2.71	1.478
		29.2	22.2	12.7	18.8	16.9	99.8		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

Although about half of all respondents (52.3%) felt that the interviewers were friendly, about three fifths (57.1%) felt that the interviewers did not conduct the interview well. Two fifths (39.4%) of respondents reported that they were not given the opportunity to ask questions about the job, and almost half (51.4%) reported that they were not briefed on the role and responsibilities of a classroom teacher.

### 6.5.6 The Medical Test

This dimension was composed from two questions. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6.21:

**Table 6.21: The Distribution of Medical Test Statements Results**

Item No	Survey statement	SDis	D	N	A	SA	Total %	M	SD
3.24	The appointment offer was conditional on passing a standard medical test	104	102	51	160	77	494	3.00	1.414
		21.0	20.6	10.3	32.3	15.5	99.6		
3.25	I did not have to complete a standard drug test	69	90	63	120	152	494	2.60	1.435
		13.9	18.1	12.7	24.2	30.8	99.6		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

According to official Ministry documentation, (Ministry of Civil Service, 2003) and the accounts of key stakeholders (See 5.3.3.5), passing a medical test is a mandatory requirement for appointment to any teaching post in Oman. However, the responses contained in Table 6.21 show that this rule was not applied to 41.6% of the teachers sampled. This indicates that large numbers of respondents claim to have been appointed

without having submitted themselves to, or having otherwise passed, the mandatory medical test.

### 6.5.7 Final Selection Result

This dimension contained four questions designed to explore the manner in which candidates were notified about the outcome of the selection interview. The results are shown in Table 6.22:

**Table 6.22: The Distribution of Final Result Dimension's Responses Including (Frequencies Percentages and Means)**

Item No	Statement	SDis	D	N	A	SA	Total %	M	SD
3.26	I received a formal notification letter the selection interview results	91	96	50	110	148	495	2.74	1.511
		18.3	19.4	10.1	22.2	29.8	99.8		
3.27	The time between my selection interview and the announcement of the result was appropriate	162	104	64	86	71	487	2.58	1.452
		32.7	21.0	12.9	17.3	14.3	98.2		
3.28	The time between the announcement of interview results and the employment eligibility approval was appropriate	143	119	68	84	79	493	2.66	1.451
		28.8	24.0	13.7	16.9	15.9	99.4		
3.29	The time between the announcement of the interview results and the approval of eligibility for employment was appropriate	123	105	57	124	86	495	2.88	1.464
		24.8	21.2	11.5	25.0	17.3	99.8		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

From Table 6.22, it can be seen that the mean score for each of the four items is less than 3. This indicates that, on aggregate, respondents were generally dissatisfied with all items reflecting this dimension of the selection process. The fact that 52% of respondents, all of whom were successful candidates, did not receive a letter notifying them of their success clearly contradicts the guidelines for best practice found in the literature reviewed in chapter three.

The overall responses for the closed ended questions clearly indicate that the current teacher selection procedures do not comply with merit based procedures that have been encoded by the Omani Civil Service Law (1980) and the best selection practices that have been outlined by many authors (e.g. Parry, 1994; Taylor, 2002; Torrington et al. 2002; Roberts, 2003; Peterson, 2002).



### **6.5.8 Open-ended Questions of the Selection Process**

The final dimension asked respondents to give their opinions about the use of written tests in the selection process (See Appendix E). More than two-thirds of respondents (69.3%) favoured the inclusion of these tests, and although a wide variety of reasons were given, these all tended to be justified by the increase in reliability and validity they were expected to provide. Those who disagreed with the inclusion of written tests tended to argue that unless or until a major reform of the current R&S processes was undertaken, there is little point including additional selection methods. In addition, those against the inclusion of these tests argued that since teachers are civil servants, they should be selected in the same manner as all other public employees, and not subjected to any additional selection processes.

Suggestions in response to the second question about how the current selection process could be improved included: the use of structured interviews based on systematic analysis and job descriptions; the inclusion of educators in the selection process; the establishment of a clearly written R&S policy; the courteous and professional treatment of candidates during the selection process; adequate training for interviewers, and; a reduction in the time lag between the selection process and the job offer.

### **6.5.9 Summary of the Selection Process Findings**

Overall, respondents' answers to questions about their experiences during the selection process were predominantly negative:

- Respondents held negative perceptions of the selection processes employed by the Ministry of Education in Oman.
- Respondents reported a high degree of variability in the policies, procedures and techniques employed by interviewers and panels. This variation appears to contradict civil service guidelines as well as the recommendations for best practice found in the literature.
- Respondents did not believe that the interviews were generally well conducted and recommended that the processes should be standardised, and uniformly applied.

## 6.6 Teachers' Perceptions and Beliefs of the Orientation Programmes

Respondents were asked their opinions of the orientation programmes that, according to official sources (Ministry of Education, 2002) and the accounts given by the stakeholders (See 5.3.4), are organised for newly appointed teachers.

### 6.6.1 The Close-ended Questions

This dimension consisted of eight questions, the results for which are set out in Table 6.23:

**Table 6.23: The Distribution of Orientation and Socialisation Results Including (Frequencies Percentages and Means)**

Item No	Statement	1 SDis	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA	Total %	M	SD
4.1	I attended a formalised orientation programme	86	76	58	159	114	493	3.28	1.422
		17.3	15.3	11.7	32.1	23.0	99.4		
4.2	In the first year of my job, I was assigned difficult duties outside class.	76	99	52	160	107	494	3.24	1.396
		15.3	20.0	10.5	32.3	21.6	99.6		
4.3	In the first year of my job, I was assigned troublesome classes	206	74	44	91	79	494	2.52	1.554
		41.5	14.9	8.9	18.3	15.9	99.6		
4.4	In the first year of my job, I was made a floating teacher	88	80	76	169	80	493	3.14	1.360
		17.7	16.1	15.3	34.1	16.1	99.4		
4.5	In the first year of my job, I was helped to monitor my progress	144	145	52	89	62	492	2.55	1.398
		29.0	29.2	10.5	17.9		99.2		
4.6	Incentives are formally used in my school to retain novice teachers	139	108	69	92	81	489	2.72	1.462
		28.0	21.8	13.9	18.5	16.3	98.6		
4.7	The head teacher does not appreciate my work	79	77	62	109	166	493	2.57	1.481
		15.9	15.5	12.5	22.0	33.5	99.4		
4.8	I feel I am part of the school	77	79	49	121	164	490	2.55	1.478
		15.5	15.9	9.9	24.4	33.1	98.8		

No = Number % = Percentage SDis = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree N = Neutral A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree M = Mean SD = Standard Deviation

The results contained in Table 6.23 show that only half (46.2%) of respondents recall attending a formal orientation programmes. This finding contradicts the data obtained from the key stakeholder interviews reported in chapter five (See 5.3.4), which indicated that all new teachers are required to attend formal orientation programmes organised by the educational districts and held in schools. Since these programmes are run by the school

districts, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to check if there were differences between educational districts regarding this dimension (see Table 6.24).

**Table 6.2 4: ANOVA Results for ‘I Attended a Formalised Orientation Programme’**

Source of Variation	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	2	37.873	18.937	9.708	.000
Within groups	486	948.045	1.951		
Total	488	985.918			

The results showed that there were significant differences between educational districts regarding the conduct of the orientation programmes in Oman’s public schools ( $F = 9.708$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). To check the location of these differences a Bonferroni’s test was carried out. The results of this test are presented in Table 6.25.

**Table 6.25: Bonferroni’s Test for the Conduct of the Orientation Programme**

(I)Educational regions	(J)Educational regions	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Muscat	Interior	.2343E-02	.1000
	Musandam	-.6856*	.000
Interior	Muscat	-2.3430E-02	1.000
	Musandam	-.7090*	.000
Musandam	Muscat	.6856*	.000
	Interior	.7090*	.000

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed significant differences between Muscat and Musandam ( $p=0.000$ ) and Muscat and Interior ( $p= 0.000$ ). This difference may indicate that the commitment of school districts to these orientation sessions is far from uniform. It may also indicate that the highly centralised management systems implemented by the Ministry of Education have been ineffective in standardising schools’ activities and teachers’ orientation experiences.

Returning to Table 6.23, more than half (56.6%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the classes they were assigned to teach in the initial stages of their teaching careers. However, 53.7% of respondents reported that they were given difficult administrative assignments in addition to their classroom duties. More than half of respondents (56.2%) reported a lack of assistance in their continued professional development. While, a third (34.6%) of respondents indicated that some type of incentives

were being offered in an attempt to retain the new teachers. Although 55.7% of respondents reported that they felt their head teacher did not appreciate their work, a similar number (57.5%) felt they were part of the school, indicating that many new teachers are successfully socialised into the academic community in their workplace.

Overall, the responses of these new teachers are in conflict with the very positive accounts of the ways in which new teachers are received and treated that were provided by the head teachers and school district directors and reported in chapter five of this thesis.

#### **6.6.2 The Respondents' Recommendations for Improving the Present Orientation of the New Teachers**

Respondents were invited to give their opinions on how to improve the present orientation process. The survey results show that (see Appendix F) of 494 respondents, 17.9% complained about the current orientation programmes. They are too theoretical and require new teachers to passively listen to a series of lectures. New teachers wanted more practical tutorials where they can be observed and receive practical guidance on their teaching skills. 15.9% of respondents recommended that schools establish systems of evaluation and review to measure the effectiveness of the orientation arrangements they have adopted. 15.7% of respondents suggested that educators who have practical experience of implementing Oman's educational programme should conduct these orientation programmes. 15% of respondents recommended that the current orientation process should be made more practical and informative and yet entertaining and interesting.

#### **6.6.3 Summary of the Orientation and Socialisation Process**

Overall, teachers were dissatisfied with their experiences of the orientation and socialisation processes. They were however less dissatisfied with this aspect than with most other elements of the R&S process.

#### **6.7 Responses to General Open-ended Questions**

The questionnaire asked a number of open-ended questions designed to elicit respondents' opinions about the R&S process in particular and of their new job more generally

### 6.7.1 Applicants' Expectations

The first question asked teachers about differences between what they had expected as a result of the R&S process and what they had experienced once they were at their post. The results of a thematic analysis of teachers' responses are contained in Table 6.26.

**Table 6.26: Summary of Responses to Expectations' Question**

Item No	Category descriptions	M No	F No	Total	%
1.	Lack of respect from superiors in the Ministry of Education	42	52	94	19.0
2.	More loads of work and less pay	35	44	79	15.9
3.	Low professional development and training	31	33	64	12.9
4.	Rejection of teachers' demands	27	33	60	12.0
5.	Less promotion compared with any other public service employees	22	26	48	9.7
6.	Lack of respect from the community	18	21	39	7.9
7.	Lack of incentives or rewards	17	21	38	7.7
8.	Lack of communication between teachers and their superiors	15	18	33	6.7
9.	Non-involvement of teachers in decision making	10	11	21	4.2
10.	Transfers of teachers from one school to another without prior notification	3	6	9	1.8
11.	Assignment of activities that have nothing to do with teaching	1	3	4	0.8
12.	I don't know	0	2	2	0.4
Total of responses		221	270	491	99.0
Missing		3	2	5	1.0
Total		224	272	496	100.0

M = Male F = Female No = Number % = Percentage

As illustrated in Table 6.26, almost all teachers found differences between what they were expecting as a result of the information they gained during the R&S process, and the day-to-day reality of doing their jobs. Teachers' expectations of equitable treatment were not met and many felt that they were being overworked and under-rewarded when compared with other civil servants. In addition, many teachers reported that they enjoyed less respect and influence than they had expected: both within the academic world and from the wider community at large. The results also illustrated differences between genders in regard to this issue. To explore whether these differences were significant a Chi-square test was performed, the results of which are presented in Table. 6. 27

**Table 6.27: The Results of Analysis, Using Chi-square Test of Significance in the Differences by Gender**

	Value	df	Asymp Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.236a	9	.999
No of Valid Cases	493		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.78

Chi-square analysis shows that there were no significant differences and from this it appears that, regardless of their gender, teachers perceive that their legitimate expectations as not being met. This is largely attributed to the Ministry of Education failing to fulfill its promises and agreements.

### **6.7.2 Teacher Commitment**

The second open-ended question explored new teachers' commitment to their job by asking them if they were planning to stay in the teaching profession and to give reasons for their answer. A summary of respondents' answers together with some illustrative quotations are contained in Table 6.28.

**Table 6.28: Summary of Responses to the Question “Are You Planning to Stay in the Teaching Profession?”**

Answer	Explanation	M No	F No	Total %	Mus-cat	Inter=ior	Musa-dam	Total %
“Yes” Including	1. It is the job of prophets and messengers	26	33	59 11.9	22	22	15	59 11.9
	2. I come home earlier than those employees in other sectors	18	26	44 8.9	18	17	9	44 8.9
	3. It is the job I like	15	26	41 8.3	18	16	7	41 8.3
	4. It is a socially worthwhile job	15	21	36 7.3	16	12	8	36 7.3
	5. The school is close to my area	7	21	28 5.6	12	11	5	28 5.6
	6. I like working with children	5	7	12 2.4	6	3	3	12 2.4
Total		86	134	220 44.4	92	81	47	220 44.4
“No” Including	1. It is an exhausting job without adequate materialistic rewards	29	31	60 12.1	20	27	13	60 12.1
	2. I want to get a job that makes me feel creditable in society	28	30	58 11.7	26	23	9	58 11.7
	3. The administration at our school seems to be more worried about their own career advancement than the concerns of the teachers	25	29	54 10.9	23	21	10	54 10.9
	4. The ill-treatment we receive from our superiors	7	8	15 3.0	5	6	4	15 3.0
Total		89	98	187 37.7	74	77	36	187 37.7
“Other” Including	1. I will make my decision at the time that I find a new job	18	16	34 6.9	18	17	5	40
	2. Not sure	26	20	46 9.3	10	17	9	36
Total		44	36	80 16.2	28	34	14	76 15.3
Overall Total		219	268	487 98.2	194	192	97	483 97.4

M = Male F = Female No = Number of respondents % = Percentage

The results show that almost two in every five (37.7%) recently recruited teachers intend to leave the profession while less than half (44.4%) intend to continue in their career. Of those who wished to continue in teaching, 8.3% said they liked the job, while 11.9% regarded it as a religious vocation consistent with Islamic perceptions of teaching as the profession of prophets and messengers. 21.8% (8.9 + 7.3 + 5.6) of respondents wished to remain in the profession for practical and extrinsic reasons, citing the closeness of schools to their homes

and the convenience of transportation as reasons for their desire to continue with their career.

Of those teachers who said they wished to leave their career, low pay, lack of respect and low professional status, mistreatment by officials, and a lack of motivation were given as reasons for their desire to give up teaching. In order to explore any differences between respondents in regard to their gender and educational districts, a cross-tabulation test was conducted. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 6.29 and Table 6.30.

**Table 6.29: The Results of Analysis, Using Chi-square Test of Significance in the Differences by Gender**

	Value	df	Asymp Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.022	11	.797
N of Valid Cases	487		

0 cells (.42%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.95

**Table 6.30: The results of Analysis, Using Chi-square Test of Significance in the Differences by Educational Districts**

	Value	df	Asymp Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.438	22	.999
N of Valid Cases	483		

a. 7 cells (19.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.21

The p value is 0.724 for gender and 0.998 for the educational districts, which means that the differences are not statistically significant, indicating that teachers of both genders in all regions of the country are equally pessimistic about their chosen career.

### **6.7.3 New Teachers' Views in Encouraging their Friends/Relatives to Enter the Teaching Profession**

The third question in this section explored the extent to which teachers would recommend that close friends or family members join the teaching profession. Respondents' answers to this question are summarised in Table 6.31.



**Table 6.31: Summary of Comments on the Question “As a Teacher, Would You Encourage Your Relatives/Friends to Join the Profession?”**

Answer	Explanation	No	%
“Yes” Including	1. It is the job of prophets and messengers	88	17.7
	2. It is the most suitable job for women in our society (female respondents)	73	14.7
	3. The job offers good job security	54	10.9
	4. Teachers teach subjects they enjoy	47	9.5
Total		262	52.8
“No” Including	1. There is an extreme bureaucratic style of management	64	12.9
	2. The pay is poor compared to the amount of work expected	36	7.3
	3. There is a lack of appreciation for teachers’ work.	36	7.3
	4. There is a shortage of professional development	36	7.3
	5. There is a lack of communication between teachers and policy makers	24	4.8
	6. My experience as a teacher gave a negative image about the profession	23	4.6
Total		219	44.2
“Other” Including	1. Not sure	8	1.6
	2. I don’ t know	3	.6
	3. I would rather leave the decision to them	3	.6
Total		14	2.8
Total of responses		495	99.8
Missing		1	.2
Total		496	100.0

No = Number of respondents % = Percentage

Just over half (52.8%) of respondents would recommend teaching as a suitable career to their friends and/or relatives. Those willing to make this recommendation attributed their responses to spiritual and religious beliefs (17.7%), traditional constraints and considerations (14.7), job security (10.9%) as well as a ‘love of teaching’ (9.5%). By contrast, the 44.2% of respondents who said that they would not advise their relatives or friends to become teachers justified their decision on the grounds of: dissatisfaction with the extreme centralisation of education management (12.9%); poor pay (7.3%); lack of recognition and appreciation by the Ministry of Education officials (7.3%); a lack of professional development opportunities (7.3%), and a lack of communication between teachers and educational policy makers (4.8%).

Overall, almost half of new teachers are unhappy and frustrated by their current job, would not recommend teaching as a career choice, and intend to leave the profession.

#### **6.7.4 Respondents' Overall Judgement of R&S Process**

The final question attempted to capture the new teachers' general perceptions of the overall recruitment, selection and orientation process that they had been subjected to. Teachers' responses are presented in Table 6.32. These show that 63.5% of new teachers rated the overall process as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

**Table 6.32: Distributions of Responses to the Question "What is Your Overall Judgement about the Teacher R&S Process?"**

Comments	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	54	10.9
Very good	49	9.9
Good	64	12.9
Poor	186	37.5
Very poor	129	26.0
Total	482	97.2
Missing	14	2.8
Total	496	100.0

#### **6.7.5 Summary of Answers to open-ended questions.**

Respondents' answers to the open-ended questions indicate a widespread dissatisfaction with both the R&S process and with the job itself. Much of this dissatisfaction may stem from a belief amongst teachers that their employers have failed to honour the agreement between them. These perceived breaches occur in a number of different aspects of the job, including: mistreatment by superiors; poor communication; a reduction in the status of teaching and teachers in the community; low pay; fewer promotion prospects compared to employees in the other public sector jobs; a lack of incentives or job appraisal; limited opportunities and support for professional development.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has summarised new teachers' accounts of the current teacher R&S processes employed in Oman. The findings indicate that, rather than the processes being standardised, teachers have a wide variety of different experiences of recruitment, selection and orientation. Many of these accounts vary significantly from those contained in official documents and those provided by key stakeholders. As well as the likely detrimental effects on the validity and reliability, legality and fairness of the overall R&S process, this variation in the experiences of recruits also appears to contribute to a significant number of new teachers feeling that their psychological contract with their employer has been breached. Overall, the results presented in this chapter points to significant problems with recruiting new teachers in Oman, with two thirds describing their experiences as unsatisfactory and almost half expressing a desire to leave the profession altogether.

The next chapter (Chapter Seven) undertakes a comparative analysis of the accounts contained in official documents, stakeholder interviews, and teacher questionnaires and locates this discussion within a corpus of related research literature.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents evidence and makes judgements on the merits and drawbacks of teacher R&S in Oman. The findings of the various data sources are evaluated and compared with the normative models of best practice identified in the literature review.

The chapter is organised into two parts that reflect the two major findings of this study. Part one examines the factors that may have contributed to stakeholders' negative opinions of teacher R&S in Oman. Several key interconnected factors are identified and examined using the working model for R&S best practice (See 3.6). These include the following three main themes: recruitment practices, selection practices and teacher orientation practices which formed the basis for the development of the survey questionnaire and interview data categorisation. Part two of this chapter examines possible causes and effects associated with widespread perceptions amongst new teachers that their employer has violated their psychological contract. The chapter critically evaluates present stakeholder attitudes, beliefs and perceptions associated with teacher R&S in Oman and suggests evidence based changes that may improve the R&S of teachers for Oman's public schools.

### **7.2 Current R&S Practices**

Analysis of the data presented in earlier chapters strongly suggests that current teacher R&S practices lack impact and effectiveness. If the data is compared with the conclusions of the literature reviewed in chapter 3, the findings deviate markedly from those practices empirically demonstrated to be associated with effective teacher R&S. This deviation is most pronounced in the areas of: effective job analysis, realistic job preview, effective selection processes and fair assessment that should lead not only to successful appointments, but also to securing principles of equality. There are a number of factors that

may have contributed to this situation and these are summarised in the following sub-sections.

## **7.2.1 Recruitment Practices**

### **7.2.1.1 Centralisation of R&S and the Lack of Formal R&S Policy**

Employment by a central authority and a devolved system where schools are delegated the authority to hire their own teachers are the two most common hiring systems (Lewin, 2000). The findings of this research (See Chapter 5) have shown that a highly centralised system is used in Oman when hiring new employees for the public sector in general and for hiring teachers in particular. In the present system, teachers apply directly to the Ministry of Civil Service and are offered positions by a central office and are then assigned to a specific school district. Centralisation of R&S has the potential advantage of providing uniform standards through the design and implementation of formal interviewing and testing systems that enable the central office to ensure that the candidates are judged according to a standard set of measures. However, the decentralisation of teacher R&S and the increased involvement of line management in organisational policy decisions are associated with better organisational performance (Carroll, 1991; Storey, 1995; Kamoche, 1994; Kolehmainen-Aitken, 1998; Liu & Johnson, 2003).

The researcher argues here that, for many reasons, centralization of authority at top management levels is strongly embedded in the Omani management culture. Indeed, research indicates that most if not all tasks in the Omani public sector are currently highly centralised and that no single transaction can be executed and completed without having to negotiate an extensive bureaucratic system. Management decision-making is generally individualised in nature, and very few group decision making processes are evident (Recabi, 2001; Al Ameri & Al Farsi, 2004; Al Ghailani, 2005). This is consistent with the findings of Doherty (1995), who found that the nature of Arab management still subscribes to the outmoded principles, and practices of the traditional personnel administration era, and very few organizations have adopted 'progressive' human resource practices. This

results in less emphasis being placed on effective R&S functions and pay scales being rigidly set according to the candidates' educational qualifications.

The research findings presented here (see 5.3.4.6) have identified a lack of an explicit written policy in relation to R&S. This is a major problem within the current teacher R&S and a significant deviation from the best practice outlined in the literature review (Storey, 1995; Heraty & Morley, 1998). The R&S policy usually explains the processes that are used in the hiring phase (Castetter, 1992; Tekeste, 1996; Breaugh, 1992; Barber, 1998). Research indicates that organisations with explicit selection policies experience higher organisational and employee outcomes (i.e., employee satisfaction and retention of quality employees) than those with implicit selection policies (Rioux and Bernthal, 2003). Furthermore, the absence of an explicit policy can lead the applicants to view the organisation as unfair and unjust in its employment practices since there are no uniform guidelines or clear procedures to ensure equal employment opportunities. This can negatively affect the applicants' behaviour, attitudes, and intentions, (Gilliland, 1994; Herriot & Rothwell, 1981; Smither et al. 1993; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Hausknecht et al. 2004).

Although central authority is supposed to be free from local pressures, transparent and fair (Hedges, 2002), data from this study (see 5.3.3.4) suggests that unjustifiable influence is used by individuals in positions of power, and that these over-ride or countermand administrative authority at middle levels within the government ministries in Oman. The researcher argues here that the lack of a clear hiring policy leads to vague hiring decision and that this leads to high ranking government officials tightening their control over hiring decisions while recruiters have increasingly limited authority in making selection decisions. Employees with limited authority are unable or reluctant to use their discretion and make decisions according to the rules, regulations, administrative orders and directives, procedures and administrative rituals that often serve the agendas of higher ranking employees (Recabi, 2001). These findings contradict the principle of merit based R&S that has been emphasised by the Civil Service Law (1980) and Omani Basic Law Act

(1996), which state clearly the principle of equality of employment opportunity and obliges all public sectors to uphold this principle. Therefore, it is important that selection decisions made by teacher interview panels be upheld, in order to eliminate unfair discrimination, and foster a culture of equality between all candidates.

#### **7.2.1.2. Utilisation of Traditional R&S Methods**

The research results (see Chapter five) revealed that current teacher R&S techniques are largely limited to two traditional hiring methods, namely application forms and unstructured panel interviews. Concern has frequently been raised about the reliability and validity, both in terms of content and predictability, of these approaches (Wright & Storey, 1997; Judge et al. 2000). However, this study found no evidence that more sophisticated selection methods with potentially higher levels of validity and reliability such as structured interviews, biographical data, aptitude tests, assessment centres, work samples and psychological testing were being used or considered. In addition, such systematic and standardised R&S practices with logical consequences would help the collection and evaluation of similar information on all applicants and thus enhance the principle of equality and justice (Parry, 1994; Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Roberts, 2003). Thus, the findings of this research raise concerns about the current teacher R&S in terms of reliability and validity and the principle of equality stated in Omani Basic Law (1996).

The findings of this research also show that neither job references nor CVs are used when hiring teachers in Oman. This is opposed to the recommendations of best practice found in the literature, which indicates that CVs are crucial devices that underpin R&S best practices (Parry, 1994; Barber, 1998) and are almost universally used by organisations in the USA (Rynes, et al. 1997), UK (CIPD, 2000-03) and many European countries (Sparrow & Hiltrop, 1997). In this regard, Robertson and Smith (2001: 461) argue that:

*“After interviews, CVs and application forms collectively constitute the second most frequently used method of selection. Usually, they are the first contact that a candidate makes with a potential employer, and errors at this stage will have a disproportionate effect”.*

In addition, job references are considered by many teacher recruiters to be the crucial information link between the likely employer and those who are most familiar with the applicant's training and qualifications for the position (Natter & Kuder, 1983; Nash, 1986; Peterson, 2002) and are considered to be a key element in the selection decision (Bright & Hutton, 2000).

### **7.2.1.3. Lack of Recruiter Training**

The research findings (see Chapter five) indicate that the competency of interviewers lies at the heart of the problem of current teacher R&S in Oman. Indeed, the findings have shown that those who conduct the teacher R&S are mainly administrators who lack formal, systematic training in R&S. Evidence that untrained recruiters can negatively affect the R&S outcomes is widespread (Fay & Latham, 1982; Rynes, 1991; Connerley, 1997; Stevens, 1998; Campion et al. 1998; Pulakos et al. 1996; Hyde, 1997; Huffcutt & Woehr, 1999). These studies conclude that organisational identity and context are reflected in the way the interviewer conducts the selection interview and is related to the organisational members' perceptions of the organization. Research also shows that in a two way R&S process, where both recruiter and applicant evaluate each other, the relationships between interviewer's characteristics and applicants' reactions are related to overall impressions of the organisation and to intentions of pursuing employment with the company (Barber, 1998). Therefore, the way the interviewer presents the organisation can dramatically make a difference to R&S outcomes, and trained interviewers should perform better in this regard.

Indeed, studies have indicated that interviewer's perceptions of the organisation's core beliefs and attributes can enhance the reliability and the validity of the selection interview (Judge et al. 2000). The findings of Rynes and Gerhart (1990) illustrate that when multiple interviewers from the same organisation evaluated applicants' '*Person + Organization fit*' inter-rater reliability was much greater than for interviewers from different organizations. Moreover, lack of formal training may lead interviewers to derive their perceptions of organisational attributes from idiosyncratic organisational experience (Rynes & Bourreau,



1986). It is therefore reasonable to argue that, interviewers are likely to develop strategies, tactics and an increased capacity for assessing the potential fit between a person, the job and the organisational environment by providing them with adequate training (Ferris et al. 2002).

Furthermore, studies have evidenced that untrained interviewers differ greatly in their ability to accurately forecast candidates' job performance, which in turn relates to the differences in interviewer validity (Judge, et al. 2000). In addition, responses by the surveyed recruiters (see Chapter five) indicate that they depend on their long experience and general knowledge when conducting the selection interview and in making selection decisions. This, according to Smith and Robertson (1993: 203), is unlikely to produce satisfactory results: *"The idea that experience alone can produce good interviewers or that most people are 'naturally' good judges is not supported by research evidence"*. Huffcut and Woehr (1999) carried out a meta-analysis of 120 interview studies in order to determine the factors that can enhance the outcomes of selection interviews. The results suggest that organisations should train interviewers regardless of the structure of the interview and the same interviewer should carry out the interviewing of all applicants. Further, Plumbley and Williams (1981: 82) cite three factors that an interviewer should possess to conduct a good interview, these are: a) good personal characteristics, b) good knowledge and understanding, c) specific training in how to obtain the relevant information from the candidate and at the same time provide information about the job to the candidate.

For all these reasons, a strong case can be made for providing formal training to all interviewers in order to increase the effectiveness of the R&S process.

#### **7.2.1.4. Lack of Key Stakeholders' Involvement**

The research findings (see 5.3.1.1) indicated that teacher R&S implementation and policy making were completely the responsibility of civil administrators rather than school personnel. This represents a marked deviation from recommendations in the literature and the R&S practices found in this study. The literature indicates that the involvement of

professionals such as head teachers, teacher educators and senior teachers can give applicants valuable insights into the organisation in terms of professionalism, and this can contribute to increased morale, as it gives them the feeling that the merit of their profession is well recognised by the organisation (Norris & Richburg, 1997). Furthermore, the findings of Wise et al. (1987) show that if head teachers and teachers are involved in the R&S process, then teacher selection outcomes may be significantly improved. Indeed, research carried out in this area indicates that recruiters can have important effects on job candidates. For example, Powell (1991) has concluded that recruiters with knowledge and experience about the job can provide more information and more specific details about the job to candidates, and thereby increase the probability of improving the job candidates' motivation and job commitment. As such information is often of personal relevance to the job candidates, it may lead to continued engagement with the hiring process or withdrawal at an earlier stage. Recruiters with a working knowledge or direct experience of the job are better able to convey accurate information about the job and job environment (Fisher et al. 1979; Breaugh, 1992). Rynes (1991) suggests that recruiters may have an impact on job candidates because they are viewed as part of the actual job environment and thus their behaviour reflects how the applicants would be treated once they are hired or the likelihood of the candidate receiving a job offer. In addition, the recruiters' treatment and behaviour towards members of minority groups and females is often taken as a general indication of whether or not the organisation values diversity (Connerely & Rynes, 1997; Highhouse et al. 1999). The involvement of key stakeholders in teacher R&S clearly has the potential to influence the outcomes of the process, and their present exclusion in the Omani system could be contributing to the reported ineffectiveness of teacher R&S.

#### **7.2.1.5. Lack of Job Analysis**

The results (see Chapter five) show that there has been little attention to the use of job analysis. This reflects a lack of knowledge amongst employers of the importance of this issue as a central part of the R&S process. This is a significant weakness, which goes against the best practice presented in the literature review. This should be evident from the fact that most researchers view it as the 'backbone' or 'cornerstone' of human resource

activities (Schuler & Jackson, 1996; Sherman et al. 1998; Dessler et al. 1999). Job analysis is described as a purposeful, systematic process that is concerned with presenting data on the content of jobs in terms of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve the outcomes of the job (Bernardin & Russell, 1998; Torrington & Hall, 1998; Maund. 2001). The process can be either task-oriented or person-oriented. Task-oriented approaches seek to divide a job into its various tasks, activities, and responsibilities, while person oriented approaches focus on the underlying skills and attributes required by successful performers. A combination of both approaches is generally considered desirable in order to elicit the most complete picture of a job (Pearn & Kandola, 1993). Detailed job analysis is essential to good R&S. It ensures that the right employees, with the right skills, knowledge and expertise are recruited at the right places in an organisation (Thomson, 2002; Swanepoel et al. 2003).

Thus, effective R&S require an understanding of job analysis by both recruiter and applicant. This is because job analysis provides a rich source of information, which serves as the basis for HRM decisions in a number of interrelated areas. In relation to R&S, job analysis can provide an accurate and systematic analysis of all tasks and duties related to a particular job, as well as the formulation of the characteristics required by prospective employees to perform the defined tasks successfully. This can be of great assistance to recruiters in making the right hiring decision (Parry, 1994; Gouws, 1999; Torrington et al. 2002; Roberts, 2003).

#### **7.2.1. 6. Ineffective Recruitment Message**

The data revealed that job advertisements are limited to national television, radio, magazine and newspapers (see 5.3.2.1). However, the use of other advertising methods, such as local links and mobile job exhibition shows, referral or word of mouth, have been empirically shown to be more effective in yielding a pool of suitable applicants. (Ullman, 1966; Wanous & Colella, 1989; Zottoli & Wanous, 2000) These methods have been shown to be more effective in terms of tenure, intention to quit, organisational commitment and job

performance (Barber, 1998; Breaugh, 1992; Thorsteinson, 1998). Thus, limiting job advertisements to these areas might have excluded other potential applicants from applying. The study's findings revealed a problem in the message conveyed to job applicants with 54.8% of teachers (see Table 6.7), reporting that the advertisement was unappealing. The results suggest that this element of the R&S process is not getting the level of attention recommended in the literature reviewed in chapter three. For example, Caples (1997) indicates that if the employer wants the best candidates to apply for vacancies then they must create job advertisements that both attract and sell candidates on the benefits of working for the organisation. Furthermore, Connerley et al. (2003) argue that attraction is in fact more important than '*status maintenance*' (getting candidates to remain in the selection process long enough for the organisation to determine whether to offer them a position) or '*job acceptance*' (getting successful candidates to accept positions offered). Turban et al. (1998) found evidence that the organisation's image, job characteristics, and organisational characteristics were related to organisational attractiveness. However, the results of this study indicate that job advertisements for teachers in Oman contained very basic information about the selection process and did not communicate enough information about the job or the necessary characteristics of the potential job applicant. Research has shown that this type of advertising makes top applicants less likely to apply for or accept job offers (Barber & Rochling, 1993; Maurer et al. 1992; Plumbley, 1985; Philips, 1998). Failure by the organisation to provide realistic information about the job or the organisation is viewed by job applicants as an indicator of carelessness and lack of professionalism, and disinterest in the candidates (Wanous, 1992; Breaugh & Billings, 1988). This in turn will affect the ability of the organisation to recruit the top applicants because those applicants tend to devalue jobs that are inadequately described (Highhouse & Hause, 1995). In addition, information conveyed in job advertisements should be accurate as research evidence shows that top applicants are more attracted to specific rather than to general information (Barber & Roehling, 1993). From this, it is evident that the current job advertisements used to recruit teachers for Oman's public schools are unlikely to serve as a 'powerful recruitment tool' because the data contained in the advertisement is not based on reliable and relevant factors and is not being effectively communicated. The researcher

therefore, argues here that the poor design of job advertisements may have discouraged some highly suitable individuals from applying to the teaching profession and thus it might have negatively affected the overall effectiveness of the R&S outcomes. If this is the case, then making the advertisement attractive is very important to establish the most appropriate pool of applicants from which new teachers can eventually be chosen.

#### **7.2.1.7. Ineffective Application Form**

The findings of the study (see 5.2.4) have revealed that application forms are utilised for all appointments and these are considered as the first step of the overall R&S process. These findings are consistent with the literature, which showed that application forms are commonly used in R&S (Shackleton & Newell 1991; Tixier, 1996; CIPD, 1999-2004).

However, the research findings (see 5.3.2.2 and Table 6.10) indicate that the application form elicited very basic information from the applicants and was considered to be poorly designed by the applicants themselves. Torrington and Hall (1998: 226) argue that as reservations grow about the validity of interviews for selecting employees, the application form becomes more important as one possible avenue for improving the quality of hiring decisions. Guest (1983) indicates that, with careful design and proper attention, the application form can become an extremely effective part of the overall selection process. It should be designed to elicit information in the same way as an interview or any other recruitment tool, providing a vehicle for applicants to supply answers in response to questions (Schmitt & Chan, 1998; Courtis, 1989; Clement, 2000; Roberts, 2003). Accordingly, the construction of an application form should focus on precise selection criteria and competencies, and provide a fast, consistent initial impression about the applicant (Strebler, 2000; Perry & Kleiner, 2002). Although it is clear that a well-designed application form can positively shape candidates' perceptions of the organisation and help selectors carry out their tasks more quickly and effectively, it is evident from the study that this facet of the process remains under-developed in the R&S of teachers in Oman.

Furthermore, the findings (see Table 6.10) show that 40.3% of candidates reported difficulties in obtaining an application form; that applicants in particular districts faced greater problems than those in other areas; and that women in all districts experienced greater difficulties than men. The reasons for these findings are not clear. However, they are certainly worthy of further investigation in the future.

## **7.2.2 Selection Practices**

### **7.2.2.1. The Utilisation of Unstructured Selection Interview**

Taken together, the data reported here strongly supports the conclusion that the unstructured interview is the usual (and often only) method used in making teacher hiring decisions for Oman's public schools. This is another major problem facing the teacher R&S and a deviation from the best practice presented in the literature review. This indicates that unstructured selection interviews, with their notoriously low content and predictive validity, are unlikely to contribute to the effective selection of candidates (Scriven, 1990; Graves & Karren, 1996; Harris, 1989). This is because in unstructured interviews different questions are asked to different interviewees and different interactions occur from one interview to another, which means that hiring decisions are often being based on a shifting set of criteria (Dessler, 1991; McDaniel et al, 1994; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988; Wright et al, 1989). There is by contrast a compelling body of research to show that using structured interviews tends to enhance reliability and validity of the R&S process (McDaniel et al., 1994; Campion et al. 1997; Judge et al. 2000; Barclay, 1999).

It is evident that the candidates sampled in this study were not asked standardised questions during their interviews and that different candidates were asked very different questions. Thus, consistency of questioning, which is considered as an important component for promoting fair treatment for all interviewees, was not achieved. This contradicts the recommendations of the literature, which argues that consistency in questioning of candidates ensures that the assessment of the interviewee is based on the job requirements (Stone, 1998; Barclay, 1999; Taylor & O'Driscoll, 1995; Jones & Walters, 1994; Drake,

1982; Fear, 1984; Watts, 1993). The studies of Wiesner (1988), Campion et al. (1994) and Cooper and Robertson, (1995) suggest that having the interviewer ask highly structured job related questions based on a well-defined job analysis is the key to effective interviewing. Indeed, the use of a prearranged set of questions can help the interviewer to reduce the tendency for bias, thus, stay objective (Dessler, 1991; Cooper & Robertson, 1995). Campion et al. (1988) determine six key components that can enhance the reliability and validity of selection interviews. Among these key components are: basing questions on job analysis and asking the same questions to each interviewee.

Thus, it is argued here that the use of unstructured interviews has significantly reduced the effectiveness of current teacher R&S processes in Oman and that this could be remedied by adopting a more structured approach that asks the same questions, derived from a thorough job analysis, of each interviewee.

#### **7.2.2.2 Dissatisfaction with the Atmosphere of the Selection Interview**

The data (see Table 6.15 and Table 6.16) reveals an overall dissatisfaction among survey respondents regarding the general atmosphere prior to, and during, the interview process. This is another problematic area of the current teacher R&S and is a deviation from the recommendations of the literature. The reviewed literature indicates that the environment in the interview room is important as it reflects the image of the organisation (Compton & Nankervis, 1998; Stone, 1998).and that the impression made by the interviewers can have a great influence on the applicants' decision to continue or withdraw their applications (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Hausknrecht et al. 2004). Therefore, recruiters should make sure that all the arrangements have been made to guarantee a successful job interview and present a professional image to the candidates before commencing the selection process. Perry and Kleiner, (2002: 8) argue that it is important to recognise that the applicant will form an opinion of the organisation based on the interviewer's appearance and the environment of the interview. Indeed, a favourable image of the organisation before and during the selection process can contribute to convincing the top candidates to continue with the selection process and influence the likely acceptance of a job offer (Rynes, 1989).

Thus, to conduct a successful interview, the interviewer needs to have strategies to make people feel comfortable, encourage them to talk, express their feelings and explore their experiences and motivations. This is emphasised by Graham and Bennett (1998: 227) who wrote:

*“Maintaining an easy conversational tone should have precedence over a rigid programme of questions. The object of questions is to get candidates to talk about their experience and reveal their motivation, social adjustment and the ways in which they have dealt with any difficult episodes in their private or working lives”*

Having analysed the data collected from the interviewers, the researcher found that recruiters' perceptions and beliefs about the interview process (see 5.3.3.3), were different from those of the candidates (see Table 6.16). Even though recruiters said that they tried to create a positive atmosphere:

*The job interview is divided into three phases. Firstly, we try to set up the atmosphere for the interview by asking candidates questions that can help them feel calm (R 1).*

This is not reflected in the accounts given by those being recruited. This difference may stem in part from a lack of evaluation to assess current practice and a corresponding lack of feedback being collected from candidates. This might have led interviewers to assume that there is nothing wrong with the way that they conduct the selection interviews and that thus no corrective action is required.

### **7.2.2.3 Interview Questions were not clearly Job Related**

The quantitative results (see Table 6. 18) show that the interview questions were not related to the duties and responsibilities of the position and that they did not test basic skill levels required for the job. In addition, the qualitative findings (see 5.3.3.2) show that the questions asked were based on the interviewers' general knowledge and not on an analysis of the job vacancy. This is a marked deviation from the best practice described in the literature, as questions of this type are not thought to provide an opportunity for interviewees to reveal job related qualities or attributes about themselves in a meaningful



way. Smither et al. (1993) found that during the selection process applicants expect to be evaluated on knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that are relevant to job performance. If applicants feel as though the organisation is assessing irrelevant information, then the applicant may perceive the process as being unfair. Based on this, interview questions for teachers should probably address some or all of the following areas: subject knowledge, knowledge of teaching, curriculum, lesson plans, teaching skills, classroom management, communication with parents and cultural awareness (Clement, 2000).

57.1% of respondents (see Table 6.20) reported that the interviewers did not conduct the interviews well although 52.3% of respondents felt that the interviewers were friendly. This indicates that many of the interviewers may have some of the social skills required to create a positive impression with the candidates, but that a significant proportion may, in the eyes of interviewees, lack the skills required to effectively elicit and impart job related information, and to provide an opportunity for the candidates to express their feelings and thus reveal their job related attributes.

Furthermore, the absence of job analysis, job descriptions and person specifications were factors mentioned by the surveyed recruiters (see 5.3.6.5) that hinder them from asking job related questions. This is in agreement with the literature which indicates that job descriptions and person specifications are necessary for personnel selection in order to identify job duties, appropriate salaries, and minimum requirements of KSAs, interview questions, other selection tests, orientation and initial trainings, (Plachy & Plachy, 1993; Drummond 1994; Torrington & Hall, 1998; Mullins, 2002). It appears that, even though interviewers may have possessed the personal characteristics that have been suggested by Plumbley and Williams (1981: 82) as one of the three key factors for conducting a good interview, the lack of formal and systematic interview training may have led to a deficiency in the two remaining areas that include good knowledge and understanding and specific training in how to obtain the relevant information from the candidate and at the same time provide information about the job to the candidate.

#### **7.2.2.4. Selection Decisions were based on Unreliable Criteria**

The survey findings reveal that three unreliable and invalid categories were used when making job decisions, these were: appearance; expression of speech; control and confidence (see 5.3.3.4). These variables do not appear to be related in any meaningful way to the job attributes, relevant applicant characteristics (e.g., human capital, person-job-fit, demographics) or organisation values and goals. Selecting teachers on the basis of appearance represents a significant flaw in the current teacher R&S process and raises the question of reliability and validity of the outcomes. Indeed, these findings are in contrast with best practice from the literature, which indicates that valid and reliable selection decisions are usually based on clear selection criteria that include skills, personal traits and abilities which are usually illustrated in job descriptions and person specifications (Parry, 1994; Stone, 1998; Peterson, 2002; Roberts, 2003). A review of literature has shown that after the final interview, the panel should discuss and evaluate each candidate in relation to the person specifications, using information gained from various sources such as the application form, the interview and references. In addition, each interviewer should evaluate individually the evidence they have gathered in respect of each candidate against the selection criteria for the vacancy. This will facilitate a full discussion about each candidate with a view to reaching a consensus on the degree to which each meets the selection criteria (Barclay, 1996; Clement, 2000). Thus, the research findings presented here indicate that selection decisions may be distorted by the interviewer's evaluation of the candidate's attractiveness rather than being driven by evaluations of the person-job-fit or other relevant characteristics.

Furthermore, in a two way process where the applicant is also making a selection decision, the current process does not present a positive image in terms of professionalism about the organisation which in turn affects its reputation and thus may not persuade the best applicants to accept any job offer being made. Indeed, research shows that there is a link between organisational reputation and offer acceptance (Ferris et al., 2002).

The researcher therefore, argues that current selection decision process may fail to hire the most suitable candidates for Oman's public schools, and thus fail to support the new educational reforms.

### **7.2.3 Orientation and Socialisation Practices**

Newly appointed teachers reported perceptions and experiences of the orientation sessions that were generally negative. Various problems and limitations were revealed through further analysis of the data.

#### **7.2.3.1 Absenteeism / Non-attendance**

Although, the qualitative results (see 5.3.4) indicate that orientation programmes are organised for the new teachers, the quantitative findings (see Table 6.23) show that only 55.1% of respondents attended these orientation programmes. The findings are at variance with the recommendations of the best practice in the literature (Renard, 1999; Weiss & Weiss, 1999), which emphasise the necessity of conducting effective orientation programmes to support new teachers. In their research, Wildman et al. (1989) indicated that new teachers have much to learn about teaching and little knowledge related to this new role and that orientation sessions are an effective way of imparting this knowledge. This is supported by Geua-May (1994: 340) who identify a critical need to orientate the new teacher who faces fear, uncertainty and anxiety on starting the new job:

*“The beginning teacher feels that her performance and personality are subject to constant appraisal by students, colleagues and supervisors. She spends a lot of time and energy to defending and denying feelings of anger, frustration, disappointment and helplessness, or coping with the environment rather than developing techniques for effective and interesting teaching. She faces methodological and procedural problems.”*

#### **7.2.3.2 Simple and Theoretically Based Orientation Programmes**

Data obtained from the open-ended questions (see 6.6.2), as well as the interviews (see 5.3.4), indicate that the current orientation programmes are limited to short and simple

activities. The researcher argues here that the current programmes represent an introductory course which familiarise the new teachers with the work and the general running of the schools but are not valid orientation programmes. This is because, orientation should cover a wide-range of processes and activities through which the new teacher settles down and becomes confident in their job (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Thus, orientation should be much broader than that which is currently employed and aim at encouraging new teachers to adopt an approach to problem-solving of ongoing classroom challenges, based on their strengths and the requirements of public education. This argument is supported by Doerger (2003) who indicates that the success of new teachers starts with a solid orientation programme as these teachers often experience a range of difficulties such as; classroom management, and discipline, student motivation, room and lesson organization, locating of appropriate teaching materials, understanding complex school systems and policies, and meeting the needs of individual students. In addition, orientation programmes provide new teachers with a sense of support and commitment and have been shown to play a critical role in increasing the retention rate amongst new recruits as well as improving their teaching abilities (Breaux, 1999; Weiss & Weiss, 1999).

Furthermore, the findings of this study (see 6.6.2 and 5.3.4) indicate that current orientation programmes are theoretical rather than practical. Information is conveyed both verbally and textually through hours of speeches and presentations. Many new teachers felt that these sessions were too passive and they suggested that practical examples of the issues dealt with in the orientation programmes would be more useful. Thus, it seems that teachers in Oman were told about the orientation issues, rather than being shown how to deal with them. This is another weakness in the process and a deviation from the best practice found in the literature. Perez et al. (1997) have found that the most successful practices used to support new teachers were lesson observation and conferencing, coaching, portfolios, team teaching, and mentors. Thus, orientation programmes should include activities such as micro-teaching that require active rather than passive involvement. Lemke (1994) argues that effective orientation should include carefully selected assignments for the new teacher, clear goals and feedback, an encouraging and non-threatening environment, collegial

mentoring, and opportunities to interact with parents. Whereas, Johnston (1985) advocates that effective orientation should include these four elements: opportunities to acquire more knowledge and instructional skills, assistance with developing attitudes that foster effective teaching performance, recognition of the effects of isolation, and help with socialisation into the school and community.

The findings of this research are consistent with the literature in that it appears insufficient simply to lecture new teachers on what they should expect and what is expected of them. Teachers who are just entering the profession have to adapt themselves to a new environment and change their life style from being students in universities to being teachers who hold great social and educational responsibilities (Beverly & Stephanie, 1991; Bolam, 1982; Zahorik, 1986). An effective orientation programme should aim to change the new teachers' way of thinking, behaviour, attitudes and classroom performance. It should help them to develop the capacity to cope with their new working environment. If teachers do not receive adequate orientation, their attitudes towards schools, commitment towards their profession and their job satisfaction may be negatively affected and their performance reduced (Veen et al, 2001).

Furthermore, the research presented here suggests that the newly appointed teachers were expected from their first day in the job to carry out the same teaching tasks and administrative activities as highly experienced teachers with little guidance or training in how to do this. Throwing new teachers in at 'the deep end' in this manner has been shown to induce stress and lead to a lack of self-confidence (Ralph, 1994; Ramsey, 2000). This may in turn increase turnover rates amongst newly qualified staff. In this way a problem with recruitment can develop into a '*crisis of retention*' (Williams, 2002).

The overall conclusion of this section is that the orientation was poorly executed so that most of the respondents did not feel that they had benefited from it and there is little evidence that it achieved its aims. It is clear that the design of these programmes needs to be reconsidered and revised if they are to make a useful contribution to the R&S process.

Revising these programmes would not only help to retain more new teachers but could provide a number of additional benefits, which according to Ganser (1999); Geringer (2000), and Schaffer et al. (1992) include: higher student achievement; higher quality teaching; increased teacher effectiveness and stronger connection amongst the teaching staff, leading to a more positive and cohesive learning environment for students; less time and money spent on recruiting and selecting replacement teachers. Benefits to the new teachers would include a stronger and more sophisticated repertoire of teaching strategies, stronger class room management skills, and enhanced ability to deal with challenging behaviour, and increased job satisfaction, lower levels of stress, anxiety and frustration.

In addition, inviting experienced educators to participate in the orientation process can provide them with opportunities to revisit and reflect on their own teaching practice and educational philosophy,

Therefore, the researcher believes that schools need to conduct orientation programmes that provide practical support for new teachers and which ensure that these teachers are helped to teach effectively from the very first day of school. Such improved programmes would probably also help to retain excellent teachers.

#### **7.2.3.3 Poorly Executed Socialisation Programmes**

Although the evidence from this study indicates that the socialisation programmes deviated from the recommendations of the literature, there was also evidence of more positive trends in some areas of practice. For example, respondents reported high levels of satisfaction (see Table 6.23) with the classes they had been assigned to teach. However, the research findings show that new teachers did not receive sufficient administrative and professional support. The results (see 5.3.4) indicate that the current mentoring process is left to the school and is often assigned to the subject head. The respondents claimed that a lack of training provided to head teachers was the reason for such practice.

The research findings are at variance with the best practice presented in the literature review, which places emphasis on providing administrative assistance to new teachers to enable them to cope with their new career. Providing administrative support is cited as a way of promoting collegial relationships as well as providing assistance in terms of making life easy for those new teachers (Veen et al. 2001).

The study found (see 5.3.4.4) that incentives were not used to retain new teachers. The limited authority provided to schools and school districts in rewarding their best staff was the reason reported by respondents. However, this lack of a discretionary reward system is not limited to the educational system in Oman, but is found in all government sectors where authority is centralised and concentrated at the top of the hierarchy of every organisation. This is another problem, and a real challenge for the educational system in Oman in general, as the use of incentives has been proved to be one of the most effective factors in retaining talented staff (Coff, 1994; Theobald, 1990; Rickman & Parker, 1990; Murnane & Olson, 1990). Other research findings indicate that the use of job incentives is strongly associated with enhanced motivation and increased productivity. In addition, individuals are often dissatisfied if they feel that they are not justly compensated for their efforts and accomplishments (Singler, 1999).

#### **7.2.3.4 Lack of Evaluation and Follow-up**

A significant finding from the data analysis (See 6.6.2) was that evaluation and follow-up of orientation programmes were neglected. This is another weakness in the teacher R&S in Oman, which deviates from best practice that recognises evaluation and follow-up as important components in any effective R&S process.

Evaluating the orientation programmes can help to determine their effectiveness and assess new teachers' satisfaction with these programmes as well as providing data with which to make recommendations for change (Yopp & Young, 1999). Indeed, without programme evaluation and follow-up, it is virtually impossible to know whether the programme has achieved its aims and objectives and if improvements are needed, and how these should be

implemented. Two main issues should be considered when evaluating orientation programmes. The first issue is concerned with the impact of the programmes on the individual i.e. how the new teacher feels about the orientation programme and if it helped with socialisation into the school and becoming a productive teacher. The second issue to be considered is the impact of the orientation programme on school performance (Henry, 1988; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). However, the reasons for the inadequacy of evaluation of orientation programmes in Oman may lie with the acute shortage of expertise and experience.

Follow-up is often a forgotten area in Omani R&S of new teachers. New teachers certainly cannot be considered experts after the first year, and most new teachers still require assistance into their second year of teaching (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Further, the needs of the second year teacher are different from the needs of the first year teacher. For instance, Yopp and Young (1999) discovered that inductees who were in their first year of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) programme, appreciated release time more and rated the BTSA higher than second year teachers, and said the programme positively influenced their desire to stay in teaching. On the other hand, the second year teachers appreciated time with mentors more than release time (Yopp & Young, 1999). It is for this reason that some induction programmes extend beyond the first year of teaching.

#### **7.2.4 Other Results**

This section deals with the other findings emerging from the overall analysis of the research results:

##### **7.2.4.1. Factors Affecting Teachers' Job Choices**

A number of different factors appear to have influenced individuals' decisions to enter the teaching profession. The quantitative results (see Table 6. 5) show that more than a third of the respondents (30.3%) had chosen teaching as a career because it was the only job available; around a third (31.1%) had chosen the job because of their interest in the job itself, and the rest (except the female respondents who had chosen teaching as the most



suitable job for a woman in Omani society), had chosen teaching because of extrinsic benefits, such as long holidays (14.2%) and teaching allowances (7.3%).

Government jobs tend to provide better economic returns (Al-Hinai, 1998). They also provide stable and secure employment, better personal and career opportunities (Ryan, 1998), and higher social prestige compared to private sector employment (Al Lamky, 1998; Al Mawaali, 2002). The findings of Al Maskry (1992) indicate that a government job is the career aim of most Omani university students. Thus, the preference of a great majority of respondents to seek employment in the education sector, may be explained by their perceived expectations of better job security, higher social status and salary offered by government jobs, compared with the private sector. While this may hold truth at the moment, trends elsewhere in the international labour market suggest that as the economy diversifies in the long-term into other productive sectors (a goal of the 2020 Vision of Oman), coupled with a rise in the number of graduates seeking employment, the capacity of the public sector to employ the majority of the available graduates will diminish, which will reduce the pool of suitable applicants for teacher recruitment.

Furthermore, the surveyed results reveal that 26.4% of the total sample of women had chosen teaching because it was the most acceptable job for women in Omani society. This finding is consistent with other research conducted in Oman which showed that tradition and religion have great influence in female educational and career choices (Al Hashmi, 1999, Al Maskri, 1992; Al Ramadhani, 2003).

The literature indicates that teachers in developed countries such as the UK (Chevalier et al., 2002); Australia (Dinham & Scott, 2000); and the USA (Young, 1995) claim that their choice of teaching is largely influenced by intrinsic reasons (e.g. love of teaching, the desire to work with children; the expectation that teaching will bring intellectual fulfilment; and feeling that teaching will make an important contribution to society) rather than the largely extrinsic factors reported by Omani teachers. This difference is worthy of further investigation to determine whether for example, Omani teachers are more materialistic in

their motives than their Western counterparts, or just more honest in their responses to questions about the factors that drive their career choices.

#### **7.2.4.2 The Influence of Traditional and Tribal values**

Religious and tribal values may be preventing some of the most able candidates from being appointed as teachers and may at the same time, lead to the appointment of less suitable individuals. Although Oman has been upgraded to developing country status due to its remarkable rate of infrastructure growth (World Bank, 1995, cited in Curtis, 1995), the research findings presented here indicate that this rapid economic growth has not been accompanied by similarly rapid changes in the traditional attitudes and values that underlie organisational processes in Oman. It is clear that teacher R&S outcomes are unfairly influenced by senior management authorities in the Ministry of Civil Service. This can be attributed to the tribal and political norms that have led to the development of mock-bureaucracy and a system of patronage within public organisations in Oman. Because of this, nepotism and favouritism on the part of senior officials have the potential to negatively affect the R&S of teachers in Oman. Such interference in the R&S of any civil servant is clearly in contradiction of the National Civil Service Rules and Regulations Act (1987) and of Omani Basic Law (1996) both of which emphasise the equality of public employment and the use of merit-based R&S practices. However, the findings reported in this work support the conclusions of Al Yahmadi et al. (2002) and Al Ameri and Al Farsi (2004) who suggest that what is “on paper” is not necessarily put into practice, and that favouritism and nepotism are factors in Omani systems and approaches to recruitment. From this, Oman appears to be in what Ogburn (1993) labels the ‘maladjustment period’ of its development, in which the traditions and values of tribal society make it difficult to fully adopt the best practices of teacher R&S.

#### **7.2.4.3 Low Rate of Teacher Job Satisfaction**

Analysis of the open-ended questions reveals a low rate of job satisfaction among newly recruited teachers. In fact, 37.7% of respondents (see Table 6. 28) reported that they were considering resigning from their post. Various explanations were provided by the

respondents concerning their desire to resign. These included factors such as lack of respect from Ministry's officials, centralised systems, poor administration, lack of community support for the teaching profession, continuous imposed changes, reduced resources, and low pay. The findings show that the surveyed teachers were unhappy with both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards provided by teaching

Intrinsic rewards, according to Herzberg (1964) are more satisfying and motivating. However, the findings presented here indicate a comparable relationship between the two factors. Indeed, teachers pointed to material rewards as the main factor influencing their satisfaction with the job. Research by Mwamwenda (2000) into job satisfaction amongst South African teachers produced similar results, as did studies conducted by Wright and Custer (1998) and Ellis and Bernhardt (1992). Collectively, these studies appear to challenge the normative assumptions about teacher motives found by Ellis (1984: 1):

*"Teachers are primarily motivated by intrinsic rewards such as self-respect, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment. Thus, administrators can boost morale and motivate teachers to excel by means of participatory governance, in-service education, and systematic, supportive evaluation".*

Wright and Custer (1998) have demonstrated that perceptions about the teaching profession are a critically important factor in people's decisions to pursue or quit a teaching career. In addition, Bruce et al. (1992) and Cranny et al. (1992) indicate that the absence of job satisfaction, evidenced by low morale, low motivation, and internalised commitment often has negative consequences for an organisation's efficiency. From this it is clear that low job satisfaction is likely to result in lower job and organisational commitment amongst teachers, as well as reduced classroom performance and increased turnover. All of these factors have the potential to negatively affect school performance and student attainment.

### **7.3 Violation of Psychological Contract**

The second major finding of this study (see 6.7) is the widespread perception amongst new teachers that their employer has in some way failed to honour the psychological contract between them in one or more of the following ways:

1. Distributive violations: teachers feel they are not treated equally compared with other government employees who hold equivalent qualifications and have the same rights, in terms of pay and allowances.
2. Procedural violations: the absence of justice in terms application of fair procedures and practices in respect to promotion, training and career development.
3. Interactional violation: this is associated with perceptions of distrust and feelings of being treated badly by the Ministry of Education in general and their superiors in particular.

Writers such as Robinson and Rousseau (1994) and Morrison and Robinson (1997) have distinguished between a breach and a violation of psychological contract. They argue that breaching means that the organisation has failed to meet one or some of the obligations or commitments due to short-term changes to the employee and employer relationship at the attitudinal level. From this perspective, breaches are a relatively short-term phenomenon and the psychological contract may be recovered (Pate et al., 2003). Violation, however, is a more serious breakdown of the psychological contract (Morrison and Robinson, 1997) and perhaps unsurprisingly, is associated with a broader range of negative feelings and consequences on the part of the employee. These consequences include: depression and anxiety; disappointment, frustration and distress; anger, resentment, bitterness and indignation; lower organisational loyalty, decreased commitment, satisfaction and trust (Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Rousseau, 1989; Robinson, 1996; Herriot et al. 1998; Pate et al. 2000).

#### **7.3.1. Distributive Violations**

Senior officials within the Ministry of Education in Oman state that it is committed to providing new teachers with the necessary support they need for their careers. This includes

administrative support, professional development and intrinsic and extrinsic incentives. The Ministry of Education also has the duty of explaining to new teachers what is expected of them and what their duties are. Informants also describe the Ministry of Education as committed to involving teachers in the planning and implementation of the new educational reform (Al Hinai, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2000). However, the findings reported here have shown that policy development and policy implementation are two different entities and new teachers reported that neither their expectations of their jobs nor the undertakings given by the Ministry of Education are being met. The reason for this appears to stem from the gap between assumptions of senior officials and those of the new teachers as well as from gaps between the Ministry's espoused theory and its theory in practice as experienced by the new recruits. The existence of these gaps often results in employees regarding the contract as meaningless rhetoric rather than an analytical construct (Guest, 1998). The research presented here show that teachers are not happy with the passive role they play within the educational system and the lack of participation in making decisions that affect their future career, whereas, the senior officials suggested that there had been dramatic achievements in this field (Al Hinai, 2002). Furthermore, the findings of Al Adawi (2004) suggest that there is no tangible evidence of a role for the school or the teacher within the new educational reform in Oman other than that of spreading knowledge. The traditional top-down culture of assumed responsibility discussed in this chapter may have contributed to this gap and thereby to the violations of psychological contract perceived by many new teachers.

In addition, documentation from the Ministry of Education (2002) states clearly that teachers should be treated the same as other civil servants in terms of bonuses and promotions. This, according to the findings of study, is not the case with teachers promoted after spending seven or eight years in each financial grade, whereas similar employees in other public sectors are promoted every three or four years. The findings of this study are supported by official documents supplied by the Ministry of National Economy (2003-2004).

Many of the respondents explicitly identified inequality in their promotion prospects and financial rewards when compared with employees in other public sectors as problems. If employees believe that the employer has not fulfilled promises made, or failed to meet one or more of their obligations and commitments, this is likely to have a negative effect on employees' job satisfaction, commitment and productivity (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). This negative effect may become even more pronounced where employees believe that managers themselves are the cause of a contract breach, for example, if employees do not receive the training they are supposed to have or if performance reviews are badly handled (CIPD, 2004). Managers may not always be the cause of such breaches, as is the case in Oman, where they may often receive commands or final decisions from senior management. However, managers will nevertheless always tend to be blamed by employees (CIPD, 2003).

In Oman, the economy depends almost entirely on oil and thus if the price of oil drops, the whole nation is affected. In 1998, Oman was running a national budget deficit due to the falling oil prices (Ministry of National Economy, 1999). This led the government to limit its expenditure and to change the written and psychological contracts it had with its employees. These changes included delays in employees' promotions, particularly within large organisations such as the Ministry of Education, and a reduction of allowances for all public sector employees. For example, teachers' allowances, which formed part of their written employment contract, were reduced by 50% without consultation with the teachers concerned. Although the price of oil has risen dramatically in the last several years and Oman has regained its budget surplus (Ministry of National Economy, 2004), the written and psychological contracts of employees have not been restored, and this may have contributed to the widespread view that the Ministry has failed to fulfil its obligations.

### **7.3.2 Procedural Violations**

The research results indicate procedural violations of informants' psychological contract in terms of the unfair application of procedures and practices such as selection and job appraisal. The results showed that employees are promoted according to the period of time

spent in each grade and not because of the efficiency, competency and achievement of the employee in their job. The results also indicate that the realistic job preview concept championed by Wanous (1976, 2000) appears to be a long way distant from present Omani practice. The research findings presented here reveal that the interviewers only conveyed the positive side about the teaching job and thus 'oversold' the job to the applicants. Indeed, participants have indicated that the information conveyed to them during the R&S process differs significantly from the reality of their subsequent work experiences. This is in contrast with the best practice found in the literature, which shows that information about the job given to applicants during the R&S process should be as honest as possible (Gilliland, 1993). It is widely accepted that providing job applicants with realistic job previews results in an increased likelihood that their job expectations and psychological contract will be met (Breugh, 1992; Wanous, 1992; Fedor et al. 1997; Home et al. 1998; Saks & Cronshaw, 1990).

The researcher argues here that the non-involvement of key stakeholders, including head and senior teachers, in the process of teacher R&S together with a lack of training provided to recruiters have significantly contributed to a gap between the rhetoric and reality of teachers' jobs. This may be due in part to the fact that interviewers (generally administrators) have little or no relationship with teaching or job related activities and thus often lack the knowledge to convey the reality, favourable or unfavourable, of what the teaching job involves in practice. This lack of realistic job preview may have contributed to the perceived breaches and violations of psychological contract reported by many newly appointed teachers.

### **7.3.3. Interactional Violations**

Pate et al. (2003) point out that interactional violation is associated with perceptions of distrust and doubts on the part of employees about the organisation in general and their superiors in particular, and that they tend to occur when employees feel they have been treated badly. The research findings provide evidence of this type of violation of respondents' psychological contracts. For example, many new teachers reported that they

were not treated fairly in terms of the respect they received from the officials in their school districts and those based at the Ministry's head office. This led them to feel that they were not valued. Furthermore, the findings presented here have shown that teachers believe that they are treated with less respect and enjoy lower status compared with other government employees. This is in direct contradiction to the information contained in official government advertising documentation, which states that the social status of the teacher in Oman is high and that teachers enjoy the respect of parents, students and Ministry officials. These official documents also claim that teachers receive special teaching allowances, which make their salaries higher than the salaries of other employees who are on the same salary grade within other Ministries (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Thus, our findings illustrate a big problem facing the educational system in Oman, which is likely to negatively affect the implementation of the new educational reform. This is supported by the findings of Robinson and Rousseau (1994), which show a significant negative relationship between violation of the psychological contract, job satisfaction, performance, trust and the degree of commitment to the organisation.

Therefore, a strong case can be made here for the Ministry of Education in Oman to redress the balance in the eyes of new teachers and to provide rewards, promotions, growth, training and advancement in return for hard work and loyalty.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the impact and implications of teacher R&S in Oman. A number of differences between the best practice of the literature reviewed in chapter three and the research findings reported in chapters five and six have been identified and discussed. The empirical evidence presented in this study suggests there is a lack of impact and effectiveness in the current R&S practices and that there is a widespread feeling amongst new teachers that their employers have violated their psychological contracts. This appears to have contributed to teachers reported feelings of low job satisfaction, low job and organisational commitment, and an intention, on the part of almost half of those surveyed, to leave the teaching profession.



These findings identify a number of opportunities to improve the R&S of teachers in Oman. Such changes might be made with the broad objectives of reducing future breaches and violations of teachers' psychological contracts and thereby increasing the satisfaction, productivity and tenure of these employees. Recommendations for change, together with the study's broad conclusions and recommendations are discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the main findings of this research, highlights the limitations of the present study, presents the implications of the findings, outlines the contribution of this work and puts forward some suggestions for further research.

### **8.2 Summary and Findings**

#### **8.2.1 Overview**

The main purpose of this study was to fill an existing gap in the literature on teacher R&S in Oman by investigating current teacher R&S practices and comparing these with the best practice recommendations found in the literature. The study focused on the challenges and prospects of applying a systematic approach to R&S that suits the Omani context with particular attention to procedures employed to fill teaching posts. To meet the objectives of the study presented in Chapter One, a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools were used that included documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and an anonymous questionnaire. These instruments were designed to capture the opinions of key stakeholders and to allow in-depth reporting of the issues investigated.

The research produced two major findings. First, there is a widespread feeling amongst new teachers that their psychological contract with their employer has been violated. Second, many of the techniques and processes employed in the R&S of teachers in Oman deviate significantly from those that have been empirically shown to be effective.

### **8.2.2 Violation of Psychological Contract**

The data analysis (see 6.7) showed a violation of psychological contract on the employer's side. This was clear from the dissatisfaction reported by the surveyed teachers with the employer's system of people management. The surveyed teachers had a sense of unfairness and distrust and they believed that their employer was not honouring the contract between them. In fact, the study found that the reality of their employment as perceived by the teachers is quite different from what they were told at interview, and from what they were led to expect from their job. These differences appear to have been caused by a number of factors including:

Poor management of expectations: The findings illustrated that teachers were not provided with an accurate picture of what to expect from the job: positive messages were amplified while negatives ones were played down. Thus, the message conveyed to teachers came to be seen by them as management rhetoric and this undermined the new teachers' trust in their employers. This suggests that many new teachers may be surprised by what they find in their schools. Their expectations about what they would be doing, and what their work environment would be like, do not appear to have been met. Research has shown that managing expectations, particularly when bad news is anticipated, will increase the chances of establishing a realistic psychological contract (CIPD, 2003). These findings are consistent with those of Wanous (1992) who indicates that job applicants tend to have inflated expectations about some aspects of a new job and that their eventual encounter with the job itself is often unpleasant, leading to dissatisfaction and therefore, a greater tendency to leave. Providing new or potential employees with more realistic information about the job beforehand can reduce the negative effect when anticipated, positive aspects do not materialise, and have better resistance against unforeseen negative aspects that do (Locke, 1976; Mobley et al. 1979). In addition, conveying accurate job information can lead new employees to consider the organisation as trustworthy. This in turn can make new employees view any future communications or interactions with the organisation in a more positive light (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981). Besides, communicating a realistic job preview can reduce role ambiguity and thus decrease turnover (Horner et al. 1979; Fisher & Gitelson,

1983). Therefore, failure to convey an accurate picture about the teaching job and its environment might have contributed to teachers' beliefs that their psychological contract had been violated.

Unfair process: The surveyed teachers reported that administrators at Ministry and District levels do not treat them with respect. They had perceptions of low salaries, poor promotion prospects, lack of autonomy, little or no professional development and low status in the eyes of the community. Research has shown that perceived violation in one or more of these aspects might lead employee to experience job dissatisfaction (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

Ineffective communications: The surveyed teachers felt that there was not an effective two-way dialogue between employer and employee. Two-way dialogue of this kind is widely considered to be a necessary means of giving expression to employees' 'voice' and is emphasised in models of HR best practice (Purcell, 1999). Novice teachers also felt that their interests are not taken into account when important decisions are taken. Further, they did not feel that they were consulted about changes that affect their schools or their own career.

Lack of Performance Management: New teachers were not regularly monitored to assess and help improve their performance. Little or no formal evaluation was conducted to identify areas where action to develop individuals could be taken, or to determine teachers' satisfaction with management, pay, professional development opportunities, or any other aspects of the job.

It is increasingly accepted that violation of the psychological contract from the organization's side can negatively influence its overall performance (CIPD, 2003; Turnley & Feldman, 2000; Robinson & Morrison, 1999). More specifically, such violations have been associated with a number of individual and organisational outcomes, including: absenteeism, less discretionary effort, reduced performance standards, low levels of job

satisfaction, low trust, low levels of organisational commitment and, increased turnover (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; CIPD, 2003; Boer et al. 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Knights & Kennedy, 2005).

These research findings identify a critical problem facing the educational system in Oman, namely that violations of the psychological contracts of teachers may be reducing their commitment, performance and tenure. It may also be the case that a reduction in the commitment of teachers in response to these perceived breaches of psychological contract may lie behind the widespread community view (discussed in chapter two) that teacher quality in Oman has declined in recent years.

### **8.2.3. Poor Practice in R&S**

The data analysis illustrates that Oman lacks a framework for a policy that creates a coherent framework for recruitment, selection and orientation. This would help ensure an adequate supply of high-quality teachers and effective retention schemes with which to support Oman's education goals. The findings of this study indicate that the current teacher R&S practices in Oman often violate the principles of both procedural and distributive justice (Folger & Greenberg 1985; Bierhoff et al. 1986; Lind & Tyler 1988, Gilliland, 1993; Chambers, 2002). The procedural justice violations found in this study included the use of non-job related criteria as part of the selection procedure, together with selection instruments that cannot predict job performance. The distributive justice violations found in this study included basing the selection decisions on opaque criteria, and interference by senior personnel in the final selection decisions.

Analysis of the various data sources identified the following areas in which teacher R&S in Oman deviated significantly from the best practice recommendations of the literature reviewed in chapter three:

1. The findings indicated that the teacher R&S is dominated by administrators at the level of central office. Head teachers, senior teachers and parents who may have valuable

insights into teacher selection and who might be able to provide candidates with useful information about what a school is like were excluded from the teacher hiring process. It is difficult for new teachers to form an accurate picture of what their school will be like from the present R&S process. As a result, candidates are not provided with a basis against which they could evaluate their personal job fit. These findings are at variance with the empirical research, which indicates that lack of school involvement can limit the R&S outcomes (Wise et al., 1987; Liu & Johnson, 2003). Research shows that the involvement of schools can facilitate the theory of person-organisation-fit by providing candidates and schools with more detailed information about one another and, thus, facilitates better matches between them (Powell, 1991; Fisher et al. 1979; Breugh, 1992; Rynes, 1991). Indeed, the cultural match between new employees and the organisation has been demonstrated to be a significant contributor to potential job satisfaction and improved work group cohesion, leading to better job performance and higher retention rates (Boxall & Purcell, 2000; Kristof, 1996).

2. The study revealed that job analysis, job descriptions and person specifications are non-existent in the entire Government sector in Oman. This is inconsistent with the weight given to these aspects in the literature, which suggests that regardless of the degree of centralisation, all staffing decisions should be based on job specific assessment devices in order to hire individuals who best fit into certain positions and who possess the 'right' attributes in appropriate quantities (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Indeed, this assumption is the cornerstone of any logical R&S process as it provides both the employer and employee with the opportunity to make a hiring decision that is mutually beneficial for both of them (Perry & Kleinern 2002). The significance of these three hiring devices stems from their use to underpin the entire R&S process, including drawing up the job advertisement, providing criteria for short listing, designing the interview questions, making the selection decision, and identifying future training needs for the newly hired teachers (Bernardin & Russell, 1998; Maund, 2001). The use of these crucial devices can improve the objectivity of the hiring process and thus enhance fairness and the principle of equality (Parry, 1994; CIPD, 2002; Roberts, 2003). The complete absence of these three elements in the teacher

R&S represents a critical flaw in the process and may have led directly to the use of evaluation criteria of dubious validity including 'appearance; expression of speech; control and confidence'.

3. The study found that the Ministry of Education uses two methods (application form and interview) from the '*Classic Trio*' described by Cook (1993). References and CVs, which are considered an essential part of teacher recruitment in virtually every country for which data is available, do not form part of the process in Oman. In addition, more recent techniques such as psychometric profiling, assessment centres, work sample tests and ability tests are also absent, even though there is growing empirical evidence to support the content and predictive validity of these approaches (Robertson & Smith, 2001; Guion, 1998; Dany & Torchy, 1994; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Ryan et al. 1999).

4. The study found that relatively unstructured panel interviews are used to select all new teachers in Oman. This approach contradicts the widespread evidence that selection interviews need to be structured in order to achieve their goals in terms of equity, fairness, reliability and validity (Barclay, 1999; McDaniel et al. 1994; Anderson, 1988; Anderson & Shackleton, 1993; Watrobka, 2003). In fact, studies have shown that unstructured interviews are 'on average' a little more than half as effective as structured interviews and they can be subject to bias and challenges (Herman, 1994; Campion et al. 1997). Other studies have shown that if a structured and weighted interview process is used, there is a greater chance of selecting the most appropriate employee. This is because structured interviews use job-related questions, treat interviewees consistently, and assess interviewees' responses in a thorough, systematic manner. Structured interviews also focus on the interviewees' answers rather than on their behaviour during the interview. The result is that a good structured interview helps ensure candidates and their responses are treated fairly and objectively, with little or no adverse impact and thus helps to generate professionalism and is more likely to comply with laws and regulations (Campion et al. 1997).

5. It was evident that the interviewers receive little or no formal job training. This lack of training, together with the lack of clear evaluation criteria, suggests that what an applicant was asked was dependent on what each particular interviewer was seeking or saw as important. It follows that the questions asked might well be the result of individual styles and preferences. This is evidenced in other results from this study, which showed that interviewers were not consistent and did not ask the same questions of all interviewees. A review of the related literature suggests that this style of interview does not provide an opportunity for interviewees to reveal qualities or attributes about themselves in a meaningful way, and often falls short of their expectations of what the process should be like (Caldwell, 1993; Dipboye et al. 2001). For all these reasons, a strong case can be made for the necessity of interviewer training. Indeed, empirical evidence has shown a direct relationship between the quality of interviewer training and the ability of interviewers to obtain the appropriate information they need to assess candidates (Campion et al. 1997; Huffcutt & Woehr, 1999).

6. The study found that selection decisions are sometimes influenced by high-ranking officials who are usually assigned to these posts for political and tribal reasons (Al Recabi, 2001). This finding illustrates that in Oman, the concepts of traditional and tribal values, which have contributed to creating layers of bureaucracy, still have a great influence over the management system in general and in R&S in particular and that they support the practices of favouritism and nepotism within the Civil Service. Such practices are clearly at odds with best practice, but more seriously, are illegal under Omani law. When the surveyed respondents were asked how the current teacher R&S could be improved, they agreed that there is an urgent need for R&S reform and they suggested the use of a merit-based R&S system that adopts best practice principles and incorporates Oman's Basic Law (1996) and the Civil Service Law (1980). Many informants were clearly in favour of establishing a clear, written hiring policy that can limit the power of those high ranking officials who currently act as both legislators and executors of R&S policies and procedures.



7. The study found that although orientation programmes are organised for new teachers, almost half reported that they did not have the opportunity to attend them. This indicates a serious setback as such programmes are meant to help meet the professional needs of new teachers and reduce the likelihood of future problems. Research shows that there is a positive relationship between effective orientation programmes, staff development and high retention rates (Veenman, 1984; Andes, 1995; Ganser, 1996). In addition, the content of current orientation programmes is mainly theoretical with few practical topics or teaching activities. In contrast, the evidence from the literature shows that the most effective orientation programmes are those that are interactive and include activities such as lesson observation, conferencing, coaching, portfolio, team teaching, and mentoring (Perez et al. 1997).

8. The study identifies a number of key social, political and economic factors that influence the effectiveness of teacher R&S. Indeed, our research has evidenced that though candidates experienced negative affective reactions regarding the R&S process, the desire to secure a public job, the absence of the alternative and the traditional and tribal values (particularly for women) led individuals to accept job offers. This implies that the attractiveness of government jobs and commitment to social values led some individuals to ignore the fact they perceived the R&S practices as ineffective. The findings support the results of other studies, which indicate that government employment has preference among Omanis for high-status and money-orientated reasons (Al Lamky, 1998; Al Hashmi, 2005).

9. The study found that almost half of the surveyed teachers intended to leave the profession if they got a better job offer elsewhere. The lack of job and organisational commitment is a serious problem and is perhaps the strongest evidence that the current system of teacher R&S is deeply flawed. It also suggests that 'the problem' of providing high quality teachers for Oman's public schools over the coming years may not lie primarily with recruitment as widely suggested, but may instead be an issue of retaining the qualified staff who have already been appointed.

### **8.3 Limitations of the Field Study**

A number of limitations can be placed on the findings of this study. First, the study was limited in its scope to the R&S of teachers in Oman. Although it might be unwise to generalise the findings to Western countries, they may nevertheless be representative of countries that share similar demographic characteristics and cultures such as the Gulf Cooperation Countries where comparable management and educational systems exist. Another limitation is associated with the confidentiality of some R&S documents, which cannot be released for publication and thus, it is difficult to verify their content, significance and contribution to this study. Furthermore, the sampling frame employed, in which only those who were successful in the selection process were included, also limits the study. This study therefore has nothing to say about the experiences of those who were rejected, withdrew, or resigned in the first year of appointment.

The methodological approach adopted relies on candidates' accurate recollection of their experiences and gathers data on their 'espoused' version of events rather than the 'actual' events themselves. For example, the study examined the perceptions and reactions of the teachers who were in post and had been subjected to the R&S system one to three years before the questionnaire data was collected. Thus, the quality of the data collected relied on the ability of the participants to remember their previous experiences of the R&S process. Research into memory has shown that individuals' recall of past responses can, for example, be influenced by the passage of time (Christianson, 1992) or by participants' emotional state such as anxiety and satisfaction at the point of recall (Dewhurst & Marlborough, 2003). Therefore, it may have been difficult for some individuals to remember what happened at their interviews or how and when they applied for the post in the first place. It may also be the case that the participants' attitudes towards the R&S process have changed since appointment, becoming more or less positive with the passage of time and their current experience with their job and organisation.

Candidates' retrospective sense making and causal explanations involved them in making attributional judgements about various aspects of the R&S processes and procedures they

had experienced. This being the case, patterns of attributional errors of the kind originally identified by Heider (1958) and Kelley (1971) may have modified both stakeholders' understanding of their social world and their interpretations and accounts of this world. For example, the fundamental attribution error that describes a tendency for observers to underestimate contextual factors and exaggerate the characteristics of individuals may account in part for the widespread attribution that problems with the quality of teaching in school lie with the teachers themselves. Similarly, candidates who have been selected by the R&S systems may attribute their success to their own abilities rather than to effective procedures and practices. That is, they may give an account of events that portrays them as having succeeded against the odds when faced with a bureaucratic, inefficient and ineffective system. The phenomenon of projection might lead recruiters to blame events beyond their control for inefficiencies or failures within the procedures that they are responsible for managing. In the light of this, future research into this area might adopt a methodological approach that explicitly seeks to examine the relationship among the various types of reaction changes over time and applicant characteristics.

The final limitation was the word limit imposed on the thesis by the University of Leicester regulations. This meant that some background contextual information together with details of some analytical processes were edited out, or relegated to the appendices.

#### **8.4. Implications and Contribution to Knowledge**

Fruitful research produces both theoretical and practical outcomes. The former tells us more about the phenomenon under consideration, while the latter provides guidance for how things might be changed in order to achieve some end or purpose. This study has generated both theoretical contributions and practical implications and has thereby achieved the theoretical and practical aims outlined in chapter 2.

##### **8.4.1. Academic Contribution**

This study is the first systematic assessment of the effectiveness and functionality of teacher recruitment and selection in Oman. It attempts to describe patterns of relationships

in ways that are valid, reliable and generalisable. The quality of the inferences that can be drawn from the research have been strengthened by adopting an approach that is rigorous, extensive, and mixed-methods in nature. This combination has allowed the relationships under scrutiny to be described by the researcher with a high degree of confidence.

The representativeness and external validity of the study was strengthened by analysing a large but randomised sample of newly recruited teachers. Consistency of data collection was increased by using a single researcher to administer questionnaires and interview stakeholders. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive, parametric and non-parametric techniques. Qualitative data were subjected to data-driven and theory-driven thematic analyses. Rigorous and systematic data sampling, collection and analysis greatly add to the reliability and validity of the findings and provide a more sophisticated understanding of the complex interplay between the various factors and phenomena under investigation.

The adoption of a mixed methodology approach to both data collection and analysis takes a pragmatic stance that privileges research questions over research paradigms and research methods. From this perspective, research methods are determined by research questions, and all methods of data collection are seen as having both strengths and weaknesses. Because of this, there is a need for a variety of different methods to be employed and for across-methods and within-methods triangulation to be conducted. Triangulation techniques that combine quantitative and qualitative data are seen as increasing the quality of the inferences drawn by researchers and as giving additional weight to the plausibility of the explanations and conclusions derived from the data analysis.

The sequential or two-phase mixed methods design adopted in this study is seen as particularly appropriate for novice researchers and PhD students, in that it is more easily managed than parallel or simultaneous mixed method designs (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In addition, combining quantitative and qualitative data in the manner adopted during this study provided a number of benefits that are consistent with those identified by

Greene et al (1989). More specifically, the combination of large scale survey research and qualitative interviewing allowed the following research purposes to be addressed: triangulation or convergence of results; identifying and examining overlapping and differing accounts of the phenomenon; discovering paradoxes, contradictions and fresh perspectives; development of the research design through the sequential use of different methods; adding breadth and scope to the project.

In addition to its substantive findings, this study illustrates how the incorporation of large scale survey-based research within a mixed methodology approach can provide a number of benefits for the researcher and generate insights into the phenomenon that are valid, reliable and generalisable.

An examination of the published literature shows that this is unevenly split between studies that view R&S from the perspective of the employer and those that emphasise the perspective of the candidates. This split is also temporal, with earlier work focusing on how an organisation can effectively select the best candidate from a large pool of applicants (e.g., Mayfield, 1964; Wright, 1969; Plumbley & Williams, 1981; Harris, 1989) and later work containing a growing acknowledgement of the power and agency of the potential recruits in the 'War for Talent' (e.g., Breugh & Starke, 2000; Cable & Turban, 2001; Lieven et al., 2002). More recently, there has been recognition that candidates' perceptions of R&S processes affect not only their decision to join an organisation but these perceptions can continue to shape job satisfaction and tenure decisions for several years after appointment (Gilliland, 1994; Anderson and Ostroff, 1997; Bauer et al., 2001; Truxillo et al., 2002; Materson, 2001; Anderson, 2004; ). Thus, understanding when and why applicants have more or less favourable impressions of R&S process might increase the ability to influence those perceptions and related applicant attitudes and behaviour (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000).

However, despite this growing acknowledgement of the significance of understanding the applicant's perspective, Anderson et al. (2004) estimate that less than 5% of all published

R&S research has adopted an applicant-oriented perspective that includes the ‘voices’ of the candidates.

This study is a direct response to this gap in the research literature. It is different from existing work in a number of key respects, and makes a corresponding series of contributions to our understanding of both the processes and practices that constitute R&S; and, to the approaches and methods by which these can be studied.

First, it addresses the imbalance that exists between organisation-orientated and applicant-orientated research identified by critics such as Anderson (2001, 2003) and Ryan (2001). It does this by providing a detailed and explicit account of how to conduct an extensive analysis of the R&S processes that includes the views of several different stakeholder groups and which puts applicants’ voices at centre stage.

Second, it responds to appeals from scholars such as Muharami (1993), Al Maawali (2002) and Al Ghailani (2005) for researchers to address the paucity of information and understanding relating to both HRM and Civil Service practices in Middle Eastern Arab Countries generally and in Oman more specifically.

Third, this study is more extensive and comprehensive than those previously reported in the literature. That is, it adopts a relatively broad definition of ‘recruitment and selection’; it includes quantitative and qualitative data from a large randomised sample of appointees; it includes accounts gathered from a range of key stakeholder groups; and, it undertakes an integrated examination of all phases of the R&S process from advertising the posts through to employee orientation.

Fourth, it provides an approach by which the normative techniques and processes of recruitment and selection espoused in the best practice literature can be compared and contrasted with the accounts of practice observed in the field during data collection for the case study.

When the normative/espoused best practice of the literature is compared with the current practices found in Oman, a number of significant differences emerge. The majority of these gaps between 'rhetoric' and 'reality' (summarised in section 5.4 and discussed in sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.3) are substantially similar to those reported in a number of exiting studies that compare and contrast observed R&S practices with the theoretical ideals of the literature. This study found for example that, formal, explicit and integrated teacher R&S policies were largely absent; the system was so centralised that it was almost completely divorced from the context of the schools; interviewers lacked training; and, the R&S techniques employed often had little obvious relationship to the vacant posts. In addition, the results of this study are consistent with those of Rosseau (1995); Anderson & Schalk (1998), and; Knights & Kennedy (2005) in that teachers' perceptions that their psychological contract has been violated by their employer may have led directly to their decreased job satisfaction, decreased job commitment, and widespread intention to leave the profession.

However, this study differs from those that have preceded it by identifying a number of variables that have a mediating effect on the R&S processes observed and, appear to be peculiar or perhaps even unique to the particular context of this study. Examples of these factors include: rapid expansion of both the population and the state education system at greater rates than those found in any other country; Islamic religious traditions that promote teaching as a sacred vocation but which simultaneously inflate candidates' expectations of the job and limit the pool of suitable applicants from which appointments can be made; an expectation and acceptance of highly centralised, bureaucratic methods at every stage of the R&S process; interference in, and distortion of, hiring decisions by traditional patterns of tribal power and patronage to the extent that the system cannot be deemed to be unequivocally fair or even legal. The relationships between these particular religious, traditional, cultural and tribal factors and R&S practices and processes have not been reported elsewhere. Identifying them and examining their mediating effects on observed practice is one of the contributions to knowledge of this study.

#### **8.4.2 Implications For Practice**

Accomplishment or violation of a psychological contract by either an employer or employee has consequences for outcomes. The perceptions of the two parties, employee and employer, of what their mutual obligations are towards each other are factors that shape the psychological contract (Guest, 2002). Employees have tacit assumptions and beliefs that they expect to be accomplished by the organisation (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994). However, the research findings presented indicate that the surveyed teachers believe that the Ministry of Education did not fulfil its promises and thus the expectations of teachers were not met, pointing to a violation of the psychological contract from the side of the employer. Research evidence shows that employers who fulfil their commitments and obligations towards their employees, and who meet the demands of their employees, benefit by having employees with high levels of commitment and satisfaction (Guest, 2002). This in turn, according to Purcell et al. (2003), will contribute to the performance of the organisation, as committed and satisfied employees are more productive and have the desire to pay the organisation back for fulfilling their expectations. However, if either of the two parties falls short in fulfilling its commitment and obligations, the affected party's beliefs in the reciprocal obligations made, are likely to be shaken. Robinson et al. (1994) support this assumption by indicating that violations by the employer may not only affect the feeling of the employee but it may also alter employees' beliefs about what they are obliged to offer in return. Psychological contract violations are also associated with increased levels of absenteeism and turnover (Pate et al. 2003)

Teachers, as any other civil servants, have expectations and perceptions about the teaching profession and the way things should work. This includes perceptions about how head teachers, school directors and other superiors should treat them. Teachers also have expectations about their salaries, their promotions, the way decisions are made and how conflicts are resolved. Teachers may derive these expectations from a variety of sources during the R&S process, including advertisements, written material from the Ministry and information given by officials during the interview. These expectations and perceived promises form the basis of an employee's psychological contract. When new teachers start



their jobs in schools, they face the reality of how things work and the fairness of management in dealing with employees. This includes perceptions about procedural, distributive and interactional justice.

If teachers perceive that the organisation has met its part of the psychological contract, they are likely to fulfil their part of the contract as a rational reaction. However, if new teachers believe that the organisation has broken its part of the contract, as is the case in much of the research presented here, they experience dissonance because what they initially expect and what they encounter in reality are different. This dissonance often produces a negative reaction in the individual and they are consequently less likely to fulfil their side of the employment bargain (Curry et al. 1986). If teachers perceive that they are treated unfairly, they are likely to be frustrated and become aggravated. This in turn may lead to a reduction in their level of commitment towards their organisations. This is because teachers may feel discouraged from being committed to their schools' goals and objectives since they believe that the schools do not appreciate their efforts, commitment and loyalty (Porter et al. 1974). Indeed, research indicates that organizational commitment by the employee is increased when the employer is perceived to have fulfilled its side of the psychological contract (Curry et al. 1986; Pate et al. 2003).

In regard to the current R&S practices in Oman, there is mismatch between these practices, the demands of the new educational reform and the aspirations of key stakeholders. This implies that there is an imperative need to implement new R&S approaches that can secure the quality of teachers required by Oman's modern public schools. However, this will be a very difficult task unless joint efforts are made between both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service. Even supposing that best R&S practices are put into practice, the current traditional culture of bureaucracy that gives high-ranking officials the authority to interfere in hiring decisions is likely to damage the effect of such good practice.

Based on the above discussion, this research study contributes to highlighting the following policy implications, which need to be addressed to ensure that teacher R&S in Oman meets the needs of both the new educational system and the aspirations of stakeholders:

1 The research suggests that more involvement of schools in the R&S process would provide the opportunity for better insights and clearer, more realistic job previews being conveyed to job applicants. Though this may reduce the initial pool of applicants, there is an increased chance that those who remain will stay in their jobs if appointed. This argument is emphasised by Gottelmann-Duret and Hogan (1998) and Meglino et al. (2000) who concluded that organisations that desire a long employee life cycle within the organisation should consider involving the local school system, using realistic job previews (RJP) in combination with a restricted exit strategy. Indeed, conveying accurate and fair information about the job during R&S is important in shaping the applicant's positive perceptions and image of the organisation. Research shows that this is positively correlated with the applicants' perceptions of an organisation's attractiveness (Perkins, 2001).

2. Evidence suggests that if organisations did nothing other than implement best practices in their selection interviews, that this alone would have a positive effect on their performance (Sisson & Storey, 2000; Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Thus Oman's teacher R&S could be significantly improved through developing a pool of trained interviewers who are able to conduct structured interviews.

3. Omani management styles are influenced by various factors such as traditional and tribal values, which are unhelpful and probably impossible to change (Al Yahmadi et al. 2002) and operate within a system of bureaucracy that allows decision makers to use authority to serve their own interests and purposes (Recabi, 2001). There is a need to shift towards a Weberian style of bureaucracy in which authority legitimates the exercise of power within the structure and rules of the organisation (Mullins, 2002). By applying Weber's approach, public employees are obliged to obey the rules and the regulations of the organisation and thus loyalty should be to the office regardless of orientation and background. In this sense,

the emphasis is on legitimate authority, which is commonly associated with bureaucratic hierarchies, and thus job applicants should be selected on the basis of merit and nothing else. Employees should be aware of the rules and the regulations that apply to their job, the kind of work, the duties, the rights and practice according to the set framework. Applying such an approach in the Omani context could help prevent the current unjustifiable interferences of some superiors in teacher R&S outcomes. This can help in enhancing the principle of equality and justice that has been a long-standing goal of His Majesty the Sultan.

If the results of this study are examined using the findings of previous research into R&S, then a number of actions can be identified, that if taken, appear likely to address some of the issues of practice identified in this case study. These recommended actions include: the drafting of an explicit written policy on teacher R&S; a review of where and how teaching vacancies are advertised; the introduction of structured interviews based on job analyses; the systematic training and selection of interviewers; the development of a range of situation specific selection techniques with explicit, objective scoring criteria; the incorporation of realistic job previews for candidates; the development of flexible and meaningful orientation programmes; the introduction of systematic coaching and mentoring for novice teachers; and, the development of proactive retention strategies incorporating exit interviewing.

In addition, a number of actions can also be recommended, that if taken, might reduce the perceived breaches of psychological contract reported by teachers including perceptions of unequal and inequitable pay and promotion policies. Specific actions might include: actively managing new recruits expectations of teaching as a profession; transparency in the allocation of pay, promotion, rewards and recognition; introduction of a performance management systems that facilitate two-way communication and allow the reinforcement and moderation of the psychological contract; the incorporation of self-development and growth opportunities via an effective system of employee appraisal.

## 8.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of this study could be enhanced by conducting further research into each individual link in the chain of events that collectively constitute the R&S process. The researcher also recommends investigating candidates' reactions and perceptions of R&S practices before and after the announcement of the hiring decisions in order to compare the reactions of successful and unsuccessful candidates before they know the outcome. The study could also be extended to cover the remaining five educational districts in Oman that were not sampled in this research. Although steps were taken to ensure the generalisability of the results of this study, Woolgar (1988: 32) nevertheless reminds us of some "horrors" related to the use of the interpretive paradigm. One of these is indexicality, which refers to the idea that *"a representation is always linked to a particular time or setting, and that it will change as settings and situations change"*. On this basis, the researcher recommends a replication of this study to include all eight school districts.

It might be useful to investigate what society in general expects from its teachers as well as how the teachers themselves see their role. Such investigation could include an investigation of the conditions under which teachers must work, how certain school variables operate and how the expectations are formulated by different stakeholders, for example, policy makers and parents. Hargreaves (2004) argues that for the successful reform of schools and education, it is important that teachers' perceptions of their work be analysed and understood.

Some straightforward HRM best practices appear to have almost universal positive effects. For example, well-structured selection interviews will tend to produce a greater number of potentially suitable employees than the unstructured selection interviews. Interviewers will tend to make more valid decisions if they have had systematic training regarding the selection system, job performance expectations and potential person-perception biases for instance age and attractiveness. However, beyond these sorts of practices, research has shown that there is an ongoing debate about whether HRM best practices are universally applicable (Boxall and Purcell, 2000). It therefore seems important that issues of cultural

relativism that may affect the transfer of HRM best practices from Western English speaking societies to the Omani context be investigated. This could be done by examining the culture and institutional settings of Oman and the ways in which these may mediate the transplanting of best HRM practice.

If the violation of psychological contract and other variables here have implications for worker commitment, satisfaction, productivity and turnover, then addressing these can contribute to the growth of the educational system in Oman and achievement of the goals set by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. This includes exploration of factors that led the surveyed teachers to believe that the Ministry of Education had broken its side of the psychological contract.

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that the adoption of best practice in R&S could bring about a number of significant changes to the way in which teachers are recruited, selected and socialised into Oman's public schools. If the research evidence provided by published studies can be generalised to Oman, then it is reasonable to expect that taking these steps would bring about gains in satisfaction and productivity for most, if not all, of the stakeholders sampled by this research project.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ABOUT OMAN

### Sultanate of Oman (Country and Economic preview)

**Table: A. Country and Economic Preview, Source: (Ministry of National Economy, 2006)**

Head of State	Sultan/ Qaboos bin Sa'id
Independence	1650 (end of Portuguese rule)
Population	2.6 million (2003)
Major Cities	Muscat (capital), Salalah, Nizwa, Sur, Khasab, Izki
Languages	Arabic (official), English
Ethnic Groups	Arab, Baluchi, South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi), African
Religion	Islam
Currency	Omani Rial
Exchange Rate	US \$1 = 0.386 Omani Rial (March, 2006)
Nominal Gross household Product (GDP)	US \$28.9 billion (2005)
Real GDP Growth Rate	6.4% (2005)
Inflation Rate (consumer prices: - 1.1%)	0.9% (2005)
Major Trading Partners	Japan, United Arab Emirates, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States, Thailand
Merchandise Trade Balance	US \$4.1 billion (2005)
Major Export Products	Petroleum, fish, processed copper, textiles
Major Import Products	Machinery, transportation equipment, manufactured goods, food, livestock, lubricants
Monetary Reserves, non-gold)	US \$3.4 billion (2005)
Total External Debt	US \$2.9 billion (2005)

### Climate

The climate differs from one area to another. It is hot and humid in the coastal areas in the summer, while it is hot and dry in the interior with the exception of the higher mountains, which enjoy a moderate climate throughout the year. Rainfall is generally light and irregular (The average annual rainfall is generally less than 102) although heavy rains and thunderstorms can cause severe flooding. The South region has a moderate climate and the



pattern of rainfall is more predictable with heavy monsoon rains occurring regularly between May and September.

## **Culture**

The Omani culture has its roots firmly in the Islamic religion. Omanis are not only tolerant of the beliefs of different Muslim divisions; they are also tolerant towards believers of other faiths, who are allowed to practice their religion in churches and temples. The Basic Charter preserves the freedom to practice religious rites, in accordance with tradition, provided that it does not breach public order. The Government permits freedom of worship for non-Muslim residents. Christian and Hindu worship is permitted, and Sultan Qaboos has given land for the construction of centres of worship for these religions. Islam is an integral part of the scholastic curriculum; however, non-Muslim students attending private schools are not required to study Islam.

Islam is based on the fulfilment of the 'Five Pillars of Islam' or the "*arkans*". By fulfilling these duties one is assured of a place in heaven. The *Awqaf* are religious endowments, which can take the form of property or revenue and are administered by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs for the maintenance of mosques and for the benefit of the community. The *Zakat* is a charity tax, which is paid to the needy. Every Muslim must pay this, according to his means. All Muslims are obliged to fast during Ramadan, one of the Pillars of Islam. For around 29 to 30 days, each Islamic year, Muslims refrain from smoking, eating and drinking during the hours of fasting (from sunrise to sunset). Ramadan advances 10 to 11 days each year as it is governed by the lunar calendar. The Hajj or pilgrimage is another Pillar of Islam. Pilgrims travel to al-Medina in Saudi Arabia to visit the Prophet's tomb before travelling to the holy sites in Mecca. In 2005, there were approximately 19,000 Muslims travelling from Oman to Saudi Arabia. The pilgrimage is organised and coordinated by the Ministry, which ensures the pilgrims' health and safety during the course of their stay.

## **The Management System**

His Majesty the Sultan is the Head of State, is the highest and final authority and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. He is the symbol of national unity, which he maintains and upholds. Article 42 of the Basic Statute of Oman defines the Sultan's functions. These include maintaining the country's independence and territorial integrity, protecting its internal and external security, safeguarding its citizens rights and freedoms, upholding the rule of law, directing general state policy, and taking measures to confront dangers threatening the Sultanate's security or national integrity, or that of its people.

His Majesty presides over the council of ministers. He appoints and dismisses deputy prime ministers, ministers, under-secretaries and senior judges. He is responsible for declaring states of emergency, general mobilisation and war, or concluding peace under the provisions of the law, introducing laws, ratifying treaties and international agreements, issuing the general state budget and granting pardons for punishments. Rulings are issued and carried out in the name of His Majesty the Sultan, (Basic Statute of the State, 1996).

## **Modernising the state**

Addressing the Omani people when he assumed power in July 1970, Sultan Qaboos bin Said stated:

*Today, Oman has "I promise you that the first obligation I shall impose upon myself is to begin modernising the government as quickly as possible" Ministry of Information (2001)*

a modern government with modern institutions and systems, with the administrative apparatus of state developed in four distinct phases. The second phase of development, up to mid-1975, established modern state functions, under a Royal Decree that created a Council of Ministers from just a handful of ministries, led by the ministries of health and education. In the early 1970s, there were no laws or regulatory systems to define how institutions functioned, their principles and goals, or the rights and duties of employees. The codification of government began in the mid-1970s. In July 1975, Royal Decree 26/75 introduced laws to regulate the administration. It set out the council of Ministers and other

government bodies' powers and responsibilities, in tandem with the Civil Service Law of Royal Decree 27/75, which outlined civil servants' rights and duties.

The quantitative and qualitative upheaval in the development of the State Organizational Structure, since the beginning of the renaissance in Oman, displays the determination of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to build a contemporary nation maintaining its identity and national heritage and depending on the rule of law combined with the integration of the executive, legislative and judicial systems (Ministry of Information, 2001).

The administrative system of the State under His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said consists of the Diwan of the Royal Court, the Ministry of the Palace Office, the Cabinet of Ministers and Secretariat of the Cabinet, the Specialised Councils, the Governorate of Muscat, the Governorate of Dhofar and the Council of Oman (Majlis Oman).

The Council of Ministers is the highest executive authority, deriving its power from His Majesty the Sultan, to whom it is collectively responsible. For administration, Oman is divided into eight regions, which are further sub-divided into fifty-nine districts (Wilayats). Each Wilayat is governed by a Wali (Governor), who is responsible to the Minister of the Interior. Laws and decrees are authorised by His Majesty. International treaties, agreements and charters signed or approved by His Majesty become law from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

### **The basic Statute of the State**

In 1996, this most important piece of legislation was enacted. The purpose of the Basic Statute of the State is to provide a force for political and social stability, while at the same time guaranteeing the rights and freedom of the individual. Besides laying down a procedure for the succession to the throne, the Statute provided for the formation of a Council of State, which now forms the Council of Oman along with the consultative council (Majlis al-Shura). This Statute defines the role of Government and the Judiciary, as well as laying down the State policy on the economy, security, education and social development of the nation.

The Council of Oman, established by Royal Decree in 1997 in accordance with the Basic Statute of the State, consists of two chambers: The Council of State (Majlis al-Dawla) and the consultative council.

#### **The Council of State (Majlis al-Dawla)**

The members of the Council are appointed by His Majesty. The Council holds a limited number of plenary sessions in a year; the Office of the Council meets fortnightly while committees examine legal, social and economic issues. The Council offers experienced advice to His Majesty and works closely in co-ordination with the Majlis al-Shura, thus strengthening Oman's consultative process and widening participation in the public life of the Sultanate. This Council held its first plenary session on 4th January 1998.

#### **The Consultative council (Majlis al-Shura)**

This consultative council, inaugurated in December 1991, replaced the State Consultative Council, which had been formed in 1981. Unlike the State Consultative Council, which was a nominated body, the Majlis al-Shura is a wholly elected body with the exception of the President who is appointed by a Royal Decree. Two vice-presidents are elected by the council membership in a secret ballot.

The term of membership is four years, which may be extended. Candidates must not be less than thirty years of age, must have a good reputation and be reasonably well educated. Once selected for membership, the candidate must give up all other official posts.

The current membership is eighty Wilayats with a population of more than 30,000 people elect two candidates to serve as members of the Council. Wilayats with smaller populations elect one candidate. In the October 2003 elections, 736 candidates contested elections of who twenty seven were women. (Resource: Ministry of National Economy, 2003; Ministry of Information, 2000-2004; Ministry of Legal Affairs, 1996).

## **QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE APPROACHES**

### **Quantitative Approach**

The quantitative approach is seen as being objective, positivist, normative and experimental (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Kumar (1996) describes the characteristics of a quantitative approach as gathering information by using predominantly quantitative variables, and the analysis is designed to determine the scale of the variation. Thus, the objective of quantitative research is to determine the relationship between one factor (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population.

When carrying out quantitative research, the researcher assumes that the theory behind doing the measurement is valid, and a well-developed quantitative tool should deliver information in which the researcher can have confidence (Creswell, 1994). Quantitative research designs are either descriptive or experimental. A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables, (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative Approach**

The main strengths of the qualitative approaches are their capacity to provide precision and control through reliable measurement, sampling and design. They can produce quantifiable, reliable data that is usually generalizable to some larger population. Strength is that they can be used to look at changing processes over time, to understand people's meanings, to adjust to new issues and ideas as they emerge, and to contribute to the evolution of new theories. Furthermore, hypotheses are tested via a deductive method that uses quantitative data, which can be statistically analysed. .

On the other hand there are weaknesses associated with using such methods. Data collection can consume a great deal of time and resources, and the analysis and

interpretation of data may be very difficult. Quantitative studies often seem very untidy because it is harder to control their pace, progress and end-points. An additional problem is that many people, especially policy-makers, may give low credibility to studies based on a phenomenological approach (Burns, 2000; Smith et al. 1992; Gill & Johnson, 1997; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Cohen & Maion, 1994).

## **Qualitative Approach**

### **Overview**

Qualitative research, as Bryman, (1988: 46) defines it, is:

*“An approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied”.*

Thus, a qualitative approach refers to situations where the researcher collects data while watching and interacting with people. Qualitative approaches aim at examining people's attitudes, opinions, feelings, and the behaviour of individuals, or a group of individuals in a narrative or descriptive way. Qualitative approaches try to understand the world from the viewpoint of those who have lived the experience, from the *emic* (the insider) point of view. To understand the world of lived reality and its meaning, one must interpret it. The enquirer must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors (Schwandt, 1994).

There are various methods that can be used to obtain qualitative data. These include: unstructured/semi-structured interviews, dairies, participants' observations, or narrative analysis, or they may strive for in-depth understanding of texts through such methods as exegesis or deconstruction (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Approach**

The main strengths of the qualitative methods are: they can provide extensive coverage of the variety of situations; they can be fast and cost-effective; and, particularly when statistics are aggregated from large samples, they may be of considerable relevance to policy

decisions. On the negative side, these methods are likely to be rather rigid and artificial; they are not very effective in understanding processes or the significance that people attach to actions; they are not very helpful in generating theories; and because they focus on what is, or what has been recently, they make it hard for the policy-maker to infer what changes and actions should take place in the future. They may only provide illusions of the 'true' impact of social policies. Most of the data gathered will not be relevant to real decisions although it may be used to support the hidden goals of the decision-maker (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Bell, 1993; McNeill, 1990).

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

### **The Design of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed in Arabic by the researcher and then was translated into English. A copy of the Arabic and English questionnaire was then presented to the Head of Department of Psychology and an expert in questionnaire design in the College of Education (Sultan Qaboos University) for critique.

Copies of the questionnaire were also given to a lecturer at the College of Science at Sultan Qaboos University with an American educational background. The Arabic version was also given to an Arabic language specialist in the Secretariat General of Islamic Culture in the Royal Palace. Their suggestions were considered and necessary amendments were made before piloting the questionnaire.

After translation, it became necessary to amend the original Arabic version slightly to make it agree with the English version.

### **Validating the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was presented to a panel of experts from Sultan Qaboos University and the Ministry of Education in Oman. The researcher decided to consult these people, as they are the people who carry out research regularly and thus have an excellent knowledge and background of the culture of Oman. The experts were asked to comment on the questions with respect to the variables that it was designed to measure. They were also asked to comment on whether the questionnaire accomplishes the research objectives of the study. Very useful comments were received. The first comment was about the consistency of the language of the questionnaire. It was suggested that all the instructions should be in the



same format. The second comment was about the structure of the questions as all the questions were structured in positive form. It was recommended that it would be more appropriate if some of the questions were structured in negative forms in order to avoid response sets from participants and make them about their attitudinal ranking of items. The third comment was about the structure of some questions as it was thought that such structure could lead participants to give certain answers and they suggested the following changes:

N	Previous structure of question	Suggested structure of question
1	Do you think the application form should ask about the applicant's CV? Yes/No Why?	Do you agree to include the applicant's CV in the application form? Yes; Why? ..... No; why? .....
2	Do you think the application form should ask for references? Yes/No Why?	Do you agree to ask the applicant to include references in the application form? Yes; Why? ..... No; why? .....
3	Do you think that it is important for a written examination test (such as multiple choice, matching, true/false, fill in, computation, and/or narrative) to be included in the selection process? Yes/No Why?	Do you agree to include a written examination test in the selection process? Yes; Why? ..... No; why? .....

They also recommended omitting the question that was meant to evaluate the design of the Ministry of Education website as they thought that it was not related to the research objectives. There were also some comments on the need to ask for the names and emails of participants as there was a feeling that requesting such personal information from the participants might lead them to suspect the actual aims of the questionnaires were different from those stated and thus could hinder the cooperation of the participants. The researcher's aim for including such items was so that he could follow up on any participants from whom he might need additional clarification. There were also some other comments about the order of the questions. The comments received from the experts were studied and questionnaire was amended accordingly.

## **Piloting the Questionnaire**

The rationale behind conducting a pilot study of the questionnaire is amendment and improvement. May (1997) indicates that a questionnaire needs to be piloted on a sub-sample before it is conducted with the full sample. Kidder (1986) (cited in May, 1997: 93) states that piloting aims to discover how the survey:

*“...works and whether changes are necessary before the start of the full scale study. The pre-test provides a means of catching and solving unforeseen problems in the administration of the questionnaire, such as the phrasing and sequence of questions or its length. It may also indicate the need for additional questions or the elimination of others”.*

In addition, Smith and et al (1992: 121) stress the importance of piloting questionnaires in order to check their effectiveness, to see how far participants can understand them and if they elicit relevant information from participants. They state:

*“However good the design, or prior testing of question, it is always advisable to ‘pilot’ the questionnaire on a small number of people before using it ‘for real’. This enables one to check that the items are easily understood and that there are no obvious problems to do with length, sequencing of questions, sensitive items, etc”.*

Thus, a pilot study tests out the research tool on respondents who would be eligible to take part in the main study, that is, they have the same characteristics as the population to be approached (Johnson, 1994). Even with eligible respondents, the possibility of returning the completed questionnaire and the possibility of the obligation to complete the pilot questionnaire with the necessary accuracy is the same as in the whole population. Therefore, in order to avoid unreturned questionnaires and to guarantee accuracy, it is better to pilot the questionnaires among eligible respondents who are trusted by the researcher.

In order to test the context of the questionnaires, five copies were sent to Oman and another five were distributed to the researcher’s colleagues in the Management Centre.

A concluding pilot study was carried out with fifty teachers representing the areas selected for this research, using the research questionnaire that was developed specifically for this study. Those questionnaires were distributed among those who are known to the researcher in order to guarantee accuracy and response rate. The purpose of the pilot was to gather information to simplify language, (Moser & Kalton, 1971), avoid ambiguity, and to avoid or long and boring questions (Bell, 1993). Piloting the questionnaire among reliable respondents provides the possibility for oral discussion as well as generating suggested written amendments (Litwin, 1995).

The analysis of the pilot questionnaires revealed that the questionnaires were clear and served their aims well. In addition, the pilot questionnaire gathered important information on, for example, how long it would take respondents to complete it. There is little doubt that there is an “inverse relationship” between the time needed to complete the questionnaire and the percentage of returns. However, the researcher was not worried about the response rate because participants had a very clear idea about the aims and objectives of the study as it was explained to them in a letter accompanying the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to help ensure high response rates

Due to the fact the questionnaires were to be completed during working time, and in order to maintain teachers’ interest, the researcher designed them to be as short as possible so as not take more than fifteen minutes of the teachers’ time. In fact, it took the participants from ten to fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaire was piloted to ensure that it covered all aspects required to answer the research questions (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1970).

Additionally, there were some other remarks raised by the participants. Firstly, 82% of participants who trailed the questionnaire commented that the last part of the questionnaire (which was meant to investigate the effectiveness of the initial training) was not relevant to this study and it would be more applicable for a research that assesses the efficiency of

training. These comments could be said to reflect limited understanding on the part of pilot respondents of the fact that recruitment goes beyond the selection stage. Training is critical because teaching is a challenging job that demands well-developed intellectual, analytical and communications skills, as well as the commitment and understanding of Oman's philosophy of education. Teachers have the job of preparing young people to fill positions vital to the future development of the country (Ministry of Education, 2000). Thus, in order for a new teacher to be able to cope with such critical demands and significant factors, schools should provide them with training programmes which in turn should contribute to helping new teachers feel true affiliation for their jobs and hence help to retain them in their schools. However, the researcher deleted those items from the questionnaire in the expectation that when conducting the survey, respondents would be having similar attitudes to the teachers in the pilot study.

**Distribution of Respondents' Answers to the Open Questions:**

**1) Do you Agree that the Applicant's CV should be Included in the Application Form?**

Answer	Explanation (Category descriptions)	No	%
"Yes", including		[Total Yes]	
	Yes, so that the applicant can add any information that is possibly not mentioned in the application form	125	25.2
	Yes, so the employer to can get more information about the applicant's qualifications and work experience.	103	20.8
	Yes, so that the applicants have the opportunity to further express themselves	73	14.7
"No", including		[Total No]	
	No, because in the end it can just be fabricated	97	19.6
	No, because anyone can ask an expert to write them a CV to trick the employer	82	16.5
"Others", including			
	I don't know	9	1.8
	Not sure	6	1.2
Total		495	99.8
Missing		1	.2
Total		496	100

No = Number of respondents for each category. % = Percentage

**2) Do you Agree that Applicants should be Asked to Include References in the Application Form?**

Answer	Explanation (Category descriptions)	N	%
“Yes”, including		[Total yes]	
	Yes, in order for the employer to have a more informed picture of the applicant	107	21.6
	Yes, because the employer can verify the information that applicants provide about themselves	80	16.3
	Yes, because the employer can request more significant information about that candidate	70	14.3
	Yes, in order to get different opinions about the applicant and their chances of meeting the job requirements.	63	12.9
“No”, including		[total no]	
	No, because references are not always trustworthy	59	12
	No, because referees, especially these days, do not have the time to help other organisations for free with information from the past, which they have probably forgotten or they do not want to remember	47	9.6
	No, because the applicant will always try to include references that they are sure will not let them down	40	8.2
“Other” including		[Total No]	
	I don’t know	15	3.1
	Not sure	7	1.6
	Better consult experts	2	.2
Total of responses		490	98.8
Missing		6	1.2
Total		496	100

No = Number of respondents for each category    % = Percentage

### 3) How would you Improve the Recruitment Process?

	The answer (Category Descriptions)	No	%
1	Improving the image if the teaching to attract more potential applicants, through increased salaries and improved social status of the profession	118	23.8
2.	Advertisements should include more information about the job	96	19.4
3.	Extensive background checking is needed	76	15.3
4.	R&S should be based on job analysis and person specifications	74	14.9
5.	Effective short listing is necessary in order to interview only those applicants who satisfy the minimum statutory qualifications	61	12.3
6.	Improving the current application form by making it more appealing and leaving a space for the applicants to write any additional information about themselves	48	9.7
7.	Providing training to those personnel who answer applicants' inquiries about vacancies.	17	3.4
8.	The better use of Internet in attracting applicants	4	.8
Total		494	99.6
Missing		2	.4
Total		496	100

No = Number of respondents for each category    % = Percentage

### Distribution of Respondents' Answers to the Open Questions:

#### 1) Do you Agree that a Written Examination should be Included in the Selection Process?"

Answer	Explanation	No	%
"Yes", including		[Total Yes]	
	Yes, because it will be fairer and more equitable for applicants as they will all do the same tests	97	19.6
	Yes, it is a good indicator of the applicant's knowledge and experience, especially if it is designed by experts.	90	18.1
	Yes, because there are some applicants who are not good at oral tests and their performance in the interview might not reflect their actual knowledge and abilities	61	12.3
	Yes, because tests can be designed to assess different types of skills and abilities to what the interviewer can assess.	48	10.7
	Yes, but I think the interview should be included as both methods have some advantages	28	5.6
	Yes, but such tests should be administered in the same way with all applicants who apply for the same job	15	3.0
"No", including		[Total No]	
	No, the results will be the same because there is no clear R&S policy in Oman	62	12.5
	No, unless it is applied to all public personnel and not just teachers	36	7.3
	No, because interviews can carry out the assessment, especially if interviewers are well trained	35	7.1
"Other" including			
	It does not matter as jobs are already ear-marked for certain people	7	1.4
	It is a waste of time and money as I do not feel that there is a genuine R&S process in this country	4	.8
	I don't know	6	1.2
Total		489	98.6
Missing		7	1.4
Total		496	100.0



## 2) How would you Improve the Selection Process?"

	The answer (Category Descriptions)	No	%
1.	Selection interviews should be structured	107	21.6
2.	Interviews must be carried out by educators and not administrators	82	16.5
3.	There should be a clearly written R&S policy	80	16.1
4.	Interview questions must be related to job knowledge and skills	76	15.3
5.	R&S should decentralised to schools and school district level	62	12.5
6.	Interviewers should be trained	39	7.9
7.	Questions should vary between general knowledge and subject knowledge	28	5.6
8.	The Ministry should shorten the time span between selection results and final job offer	12	2.4
9.	Candidates should receive professional treatment during the selection process	7	1.4
10.	I don't know	3	.6
Missing		0	0.0
Total		496	100.0

No = Number of respondents for each category    % = Percentage

## Appendix F

### Summary of Comments to the Question, “How would you improve the orientation programme?”

	The answer (Category Descriptions)	No	%
1.	There should be practical training to facilitate new teachers’ entry into the profession	89	17.9
2.	Schools should seek to establish evaluation systems to measure the effectiveness of the induction programmes	79	15.9
3.	Such sessions should be carried out by people who are familiar with the Omani educational philosophy	78	15.7
4.	These sessions should be fun and interesting	72	14.5
5.	Orientation should be attended by some officials from the educational districts	48	9.7
6.	Experienced teachers should participate in such sessions	38	7.7
7.	Those sessions should be held prior the start of the school year	35	7.1
8.	Orientation sessions should include current issues that have a direct influence on teachers’ lives, such as their financial positions and the school’s management system	32	6.5
9.	Ensuring that such sessions are conducted in schools	12	2.4
10.	Inviting teachers from local universities and colleges to participate in such sessions so that teachers understand the importance of such sessions	8	1.6
11	I don’ know	3	.6
Missing		2	.4
Total of responses		494	99.6

No = Number of respondents for each category    % = Percentage

**TRANSLATED ENGLISH VERSION OF THE RESEARCH  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Teacher,

The researcher is conducting a study on teacher recruitment and selection for public schools in Oman. The purpose is to obtain a better picture and better understanding of this crucial issue, the outcomes of which will hopefully help in providing better recruiting policies in the future.

This survey is a major part of the researcher's PhD degree dissertation at the University of Leicester in the U.K. Therefore, , he is kindly asking you to spare some of your time to complete the questionnaire attached.

The researcher would like to assure you that the data collected from the questionnaires will only be used for the above-mentioned purposes and will remain confidential. Total anonymity in this survey is ensured, as the names of participants and their schools are not required.

Your cooperation and support are very much appreciated and your opinions and views will be very much valued.

Thank you,

Khamis Al Tobi (The Researcher)

University of Leicester – UK

## **Section One (Demographic Information)**

### **1.1 Individual's information (Please insert the appropriate information)**

Gender	Qualification/s

### **1.2 School district (Please tick the appropriate box)**

Muscat	Interior	Musandam

### **1.3 Level of teaching:**

Primary	Secondary

### **1.4 Academic Year of appointment**

2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003

## **Section Two (Recruitment Process) Part: 1**

### **2.1 Why did you apply for the job?**

It is a job I like	It was the only job available	The long holiday teachers get	The teaching allowances

Others, please specify.....  
.....

### **2.2 How did you hear about the job?**

TV	Radio	Newspaper	Magazine

Others, please specify.....  
.....

## **Section Two (Recruitment Process) Part: 2**

Read the following statements carefully and tick the number that matches your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The number ranges from 1 meaning *Strongly Disagree* to 5 meaning *Strongly Agree*. You must choose one number only for each statement

1 = I strongly disagree (SD)

2 = I disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = I agree

5 = I strongly agree (SA)

2	<u>The effectiveness of advertisement</u>	SD		N		SA
		←				→
		1	2	3	4	5
2.3	The job advertisement was attractive					
2.4	The advertisement conveyed enough information about the job					
2.5	The advertisement did not contain clear instructions about the application process					
2.6	The Ministry of Education Web Site was easy to access.					
2.7	The Ministry of Education Web Site provided me with most the information I needed about the job					
2.8	I was generally well treated during telephone calls to inquire about the job					
2	<u>The effectiveness of the application form)</u>	SD		N		SA
		1	2	3	4	5
2.9	It was not easy for me to obtain the application form					
2.10	The application form was structured in a way that encouraged me to complete it					
2.11	The application form asked for most of the information I wanted to include					
2.12	It was not easy for me to return the application form					

2	<u>Screening and feedback</u>	SD	2	N	4	SA
		1		3		5
2.13	I was not called for a formal initial interview (screening interview) prior to the selection interview.					
2.14	I received official feedback of being selected for the subsequent selection process					

**2.15 Do you agree that the applicant's CV should be included in the application form?**

**Yes; Why?**

.....  
 .....

**No; Why?**

.....  
 .....,,

**2.16 Do you agree that applicants should be asked to include references in the application form?**

**Yes; Why?**

.....  
 .....

**No; why?**

.....  
 .....

**2.17 How would you improve the recruitment process?**

.....  
 .....

### **Section Three: (Selection Process)**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

3	<u>General atmosphere prior to commencement of interview</u>	SD		N		SA
		1	2	3	4	5
3.1	I was not notified about the interview in sufficient time					
3.2	I was interviewed on/around the time appointed for me					
3	<u>General atmosphere during interview process</u>	SD		N		SA
		1	2	3	4	5
3.3	The general atmosphere in the interview room was satisfactory					
3.4	The interviewers started the interview by asking general questions					
3.5	I felt comfortable during the interview					
3.6	I was prompted and given clarification when I required it in the interview					
3	<u>Types of interview questions</u>	SD		N		SA
		1	2	3	4	5
3.7	The interview questions were generally within the level of my knowledge					
3.8	I was asked intellectual questions					
3.9	I was asked questions about my natural aptitudes					
3.10	I was evaluated in different types of teaching skills					
3.11	I was asked what motivated me to become a teacher					
3.12	I was not asked questions about my experience in teaching					
3.13	I was asked questions about my knowledge in my subject					
3.14	I was asked to describe the key elements in conducting a lesson					
3.15	I was asked to give a practical teaching lesson					
3.16	I was asked how I could help my students to develop their study skills					
3.17	I was asked how to handle discipline problems					

3	<b><u>The Selection committee</u></b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>SA</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3.18	The interview committee included teacher educators beside the administrators					
3.19	The interview panel included school personnel beside the administrators					
3	<b><u>Effectiveness of interviewers</u></b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>SA</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3.20	The interviewers were friendly					
3.21	The interviewers conducted the interview well					
3.22	I was not given the opportunity to enquire about issues relating to the job					
3.23	At the end of the interview I was briefed on the tasks and responsibilities involved in the job					
3	<b><u>The medical test</u></b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>SA</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3.24	The appointment offer was conditional on passing a standard medical test					
3.25	I did not have to complete a standardised drug test					
3	<b><u>Final results</u></b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>SA</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3.26	I received a formal notification letter regarding the selection interview results					
3.27	The time between my selection interview and the announcement of the result was appropriate					
3.28	The time between the announcement of the interview results and the approval of eligibility for employment was appropriate					
3.29	The time between my selection interview results and my final job confirmation was appropriate					



**3.30 Do you agree that a written examination should be included in the selection process?**

**Yes; Why?**

.....  
 .....

**No; Why?**

.....  
 .....

**3.31 How would you improve the selection process?**

.....  
 .....

#### **4. Section Four (Orientation and Socialisation)**

**To what extent are the following statements in agreement with your situation?**

4.	<u>Orientation sessions</u>	SD		N		SA
		1	2	3	4	5
		←				→
4.1	I attended a formalized orientation programme					
4.2	In the first year of my job, I was assigned with difficult duties outside class.					
4.3	In the first year of my job, I was assigned troublesome classes					
4.4	In the first year of my job, I was made a floating teacher					
4.5	In the first year of my job, I was helped to monitor my progress					
4.6	Incentives are formally used in my school to retain teachers					
4.7	The head teacher does not appreciate my work					
4.8	I feel I am part of the school					

**4.9 How would you improve the orientation program?**

.....  
.....

**4.10 Are there any differences between what you were told during R&S process about what you were expecting and your experience of the actual job? If yes, please specify**

.....  
.....

**4.11 Are you planning to stay in the teaching profession?**

**Yes; Why?**

.....  
.....

**No; Why?**

.....  
.....

**4.12 As a teacher, would you encourage your friends/relatives to join the teaching profession?**

**Yes; Why?**

.....  
.....

**No; Why?**

.....  
.....

**4.13 What is your overall judgment about the teacher recruitment and selection process?**

**A: Excellent** ☐ **B: V. Good** ☐ **C: Good** ☐ **D: Poor.** ☐ **E: V. Poor** ☐

**Thank for the time you devote to completing this questionnaire**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

المملكة المتحدة

جامعة لستر

الدراسات العليا / الدكتوراه

الكرام

الأخوة / الأخوات المعلمين

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،،،، و بعد،،،،

تقوم وزارة التربية و التعليم في السلطنة بعملية تطوير شامل للنظام التعليمي من خلال استحداث نظام التعليم الأساسي و ما يصاحبه من تغير جذري في إعداد المعلمين و تأهيلهم بما يوافق و تلك التحديثات. و الإستبيان الحالي جزء من أطروحة دكتوراه يعدها الباحث في المملكة المتحدة / جامعة لستر تهدف إلى تقويم عملية توظيف المعلمين و إختيارهم في سلطنة عمان. و بما أنك أحد المشمولين بهذه الدراسة، فإن الباحث ليرجو شاكرا، التكرم بمنحه جزء من وقتكم و قراءة الإستبيان المرفق قراءة دقيقة، علما بأن الإستبيان لا يتطلب ذكر الاسم، و أن المعلومات التي سيتم جمعها لن يطلع عليها سوى الباحث. ختاماً يسر الباحث أن يقدم لكم خالص شكره و تقديره مقدماً، و إذا كانت لديكم أية ملاحظات يمكنكم ذكرها في الصفحة الأخيرة من الإستبيان، و الله ولي التوفيق

مخلصكم طالب الدكتوراه

خميس بن سعود بن سعيد التوبي  
جامعة لستر/ المملكة المتحدة

## الجزء الثاني ( إقرأت التوظيف )

### الجزء الأول

الرجاء وضع إشارة ( صح ) في المكان المناسب

#### 1:1 معلومات عامه

المؤهل	الجنس

#### 2:1 المنطقة التعليمية

مسقط	الداخلية	مستدم

#### 3:1 المرحلة التي تدرسها

ابتدائي	ثانوي

#### 4:1 العام الذي عينت فيه في الوظيفة

2003-2002	2002-2001	2001-2000

## الجزء الثاني ( أ ) إجراءات التوظيف

### 1:2 كيف سمعت عن الوظيفة؟

التلفزيون	المذياع	جريدة	مجلة	أخرى (يرجى ذكرها)

### 2:2 لماذا تقدمت للحصول على الوظيفة؟

لأنها الوظيفة التي أحبها	لأنها كانت الوظيفة الوحيدة الشاغرة	لطول الإجازات المدرسية	لعلوة التدريس

### لأسباب أخرى يرجى ذكرها:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

الجزء الثاني ( ب ) إجراءات التوظيف

الرجاء قراءة الجمل التالية بتمعن ووضع علامة (صح) أمام الرقم الذي يتناسب و موافقتك على مضمون العبارة. الأرقام من 1 الى 5 تعني كما يلي:

1: لا أوافق بشدة

2: لا أوافق

3: ليس لي رأي

4: أوافق

5: أوافق و بشدة

المسلسل	( أ ) فعالية الإعلان	لا	1	2	3	4	أو	5
3:2	الاعلان عن الوظيفة كان مشوقاً							
4:2	الإعلان عن الوظيفة احتوى على معلومات كافية عن الوظيفة							
5:2	الإعلان عن الوظيفة لم يحتو على إرشادات كافية عن كيفية التقدم للوظيفة المعلن عنها							
6:2	موقع وزارة التربية و التعليم على الانترنت زودني بمعظم المعلومات التي طلبتها							
7:2	موقع وزارة التربية و التعليم على الانترنت سهل دخوله							
8:2	بصفه عامة كانت معاملة موظفي الاستقبال مهذبة عند اول اتصال لي للاستفسار عن الوظيفة							
المسلسل	( ب ) فعالية استمارة التقدم للوظيفة	لا	1	2	3	4	أو	5
9:2	لم يكن سهلا علي الحصول على استمارة التقدم للوظيفة							
10:2	استمارة التقدم للوظيفة كانت مساعة بطريقة تشجيني على املائها							

					استمارة التقدم للوظيفة احتوت على غالبية المعلومات عني التي ارجب في كتابتها	<b>11:2</b>
					لم يكن سهلا علي توصيل استمارة التقدم للوظيفة	<b>12:2</b>
					لم يتم استدعائي لمقابلة مبدئية قبل البدء في اجراءات الاختيار	<b>13:2</b>
					تلقيت إفادة عن مدى تأهلي لدخول المقابلة الشخصية للوظيفة	<b>14:2</b>

**15:2** هل توافق في احتواء استمارة طلب الوظيفة على السيرة الذاتية للمتقدم للوظيفة؟  
نعم – لماذا؟

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لا – لماذا؟

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**16:2** هل توافق على احتواء الطلب على مراجع – شهود للمتقدم للوظيفة؟  
نعم – لماذا؟

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لا – لماذا؟

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**17:2 من فضلك اعطي مقترحاتك من اجل تحسين و الارتقاء لما ذكر أعلاه عن  
عملية التوظيف**

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### الجزء الثالث إجراءات الاختيار

المسلسل	( أ ) الجو العام قبل المقابلة	لا 1 2 3 4 5 أو
1:3	لم يتم إخباري بوقت كاف عن موعد المقابلة الشخصية للوظيفة	
2:3	تمت مقابلي في حدود الوقت المحدد لي مسبقاً	
المسلسل	( ب ) الجو العام أثناء المقابلة	لا 1 2 3 4 5 أو
3:3	الجو العام في مكان المقابلة كان مرضياً	
4:3	بدأ المقابلون المقابلة بطرح أسئلة عامه	
5:3	شعرت بالارتياح وقت إجراء المقابلة	
6:3	المقابلون يوضحون الأسئلة عند عدم فهمي لسؤال ما	
المسلسل	( ج ) أنواع أسئلة المقابلة	لا 1 2 3 4 5 أو
7:3	أسئلة المقابلة كانت في حدود معرفتي	
8:3	سئلت أسئلة ذكاء	
9:3	سئلت عن قدراتي الذاتية	
10:3	تم تقييم مهاراتي التدريسية في نواحي مختلفة	
11:3	سئلت عن الأسباب التي شجعتني في اختيار مهنة التعليم	
12:3	لم أسأل عن خبراتي السابقة في مجال التدريس	
13:3	تم تقييم معرفتي في مجال المادة التي ادرسها	
14:3	طلب مني ان اشرح الخطوات الرئيسية المتبعة في اعطاء الدرس	
15:3	طلب مني تقديم درس عملي	
16:3	سئلت عن الاسلوب الفعال في تنمية مهارات التعلم	

					الذاتي لدى الطلاب	
					سئلت عن كيفية معالجة مشاكل الطلاب الصفية	17:3
أو	5	4	3	2	لا	1
					(د) بنية لجنة المقابلة	
					لجنة الممتحنين ضمت اساتذة تربويين بجانب الاداريين	18:3
					لجنة الممتحنين ضمت مدراء مدارس بجانب الاداريين	19:3
أو	5	4	3	2	لا	1
					(هـ) فاعلية لجنة المقابلة	
					المقابلون كانوا لطيفين معي	20:3
					الممتحنون اجروا المقابلة بإتقان	21:3
					لم أعط الفرصة للاستفسار عن أمور مختلفة المتعلقة بالوظيفة	22:3
					في نهاية المقابلة تم إعطائي صورة مختصرة عن الوظيفة و ما تشمله من واجبات و حقوق	23:3
أو	5	4	3	2	لا	1
					(و) الفحص الطبي	
					عرض الوظيفة كان مشروطاً بإجتياز الفحص الطبي	24:3
					لم يكن لزاماً علي إجراء فحص المخدرات	25:3

<div> <div> أو 5 </div> <div> 4 </div> <div> 3 </div> <div> 2 </div> <div> لا 1 </div> </div>					(ز) الإجراءات، النهائية	
					تلقيت خطابا رسميا بنتيجة المقابلة الرئيسية	26:3
					المدة بين اجراء المقابلة و اعلان النتيجة كانت مناسبة	27:3
					المدة التي استغرقتها الاجراءات الأمنية كانت مقبولة	28:3
					تم الاتصال بي لإستلام العمل في حدود الاطار المحدد لي سابقا	29:3

**30:3** هل توافق في اجراء امتحان تحريري للمتقدمين للوظيفة؟  
نعم / لماذا؟

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لا / لماذا؟

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**31:3** كيف تقترح الارتقاء باسلوب اختيار المتقدمين للوظيفة؟

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### الجزء الرابع المشاغل التعريفية

المسلسل	( أ ) المشاغل التعريفية	لا	أو			
		1	2	3	4	5
1:4	حضرت مشاغل تعريفية رتبت للمعلمين الجدد					
2:4	عند بداية عملي أسندت إلي الأعمال الأكثر صعوبة خارج الصف					
3:4	عند بداية عملي أسندت إلي الصفوف الأكثر شغلاً					
4:4	عند بداية عملي لم أكن مشرفاً لصف بعينه					
5:4	تمت مساعدتي في الارتقاء بمستواي المهني خلال الأيام الأولى من حياتي المهنية					
6:4	يتم تكريم المعلمين المتميزين في مدرستي					
7:4	مدير المدرسة لا يقدر عملي					
8:4	أشعر إنني جزء من المدرسة					

9:4 ماذا كان بودك ان تغطي مثل هذه المشاغل التعريفية من أمور لم تتطرق إليها؟

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10:4 إذا كنت تعتقد أن ما قيل لك عن الوظيفة خلال التعيين يختلف عن الواقع، أرجو ذكرها

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11:4 هل تخطط في البقاء في الوظيفة؟  
نعم / لماذا؟

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لا / لماذا؟

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**12:4** كمعلم هل تنصح أقرباك / أصدقائك في الالتحاق بسلك التدريس؟  
نعم / لماذا؟

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لا / لماذا؟

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**13:4** ما هو تقييمك النهائي لعملية التوظيف و إختيار المعلمين بشكل عام؟

1: ممتازة	2: جيدة جداً	3: جيدة	4: ضعيفة	5: ضعيفة جداً

نشكركم جزيل الشكر على تكرمكم بتكملة هذا الاستبيان

**The Interview Schedule**

**A) Semi-structured interview's schedule for personnel in charge of recruitment and selection (HRM Departments) in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service**

1. Would you please outline, in chronological order, the recruitment and selection processes that you use when hiring new teachers?
2. Who is involved in teacher R&S?
3. Are schools/districts represented in the recruitment and selection of their teaching staff?
4. Do you agree that schools should be represented in the recruitment and selection process? And, if so, why?
5. What types of advertising do you use?
6. What is included in the job advertisement?
7. Does one application form apply to all types of employees?
8. What is included in the application form?
9. What process is used to notify applicants of the outcome?
10. Would you agree that the applicants to include their CVs with the application forms? And, if so, why?
11. Would you agree that applicants should be asked to provide references? And, if so, why?
12. Are the interviews structured? For example, do you ask the same questions and probes (if they are used) to all applicants? And do you use rating scales for each question to gauge the responses?
13. Do those personnel who conduct the selection process in the Civil Service, receive training in how to conduct the selection process?
14. What type of interview questions do you ask the job applicant during the interview?
15. How do you conduct the selection interview?

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16. How do you make the decision about whether or not to hire particular candidates?
  17. Is passing the medical test compulsory for the teaching j candidates?
  18. If yes, how do you organise the medical test?
  19. Do you carry out background checking on the job candidates?
  20. In general, are you satisfied with the current criteria applied in recruiting teaching staff for our schools? Why or why not?
  21. How would you improve the recruitment and selection process?
  22. Do you have any other points you wish to add?

**B) Semi-structured interview's schedule for head teachers and schools' districts officials**

1. Are schools/districts represented in the recruitment and selection of their teaching staff?
2. Do you agree that schools should be represented in the recruitment and selection process? Why or why not?
3. Do you organise orientation programs for your newly hired teachers? If so, how are such sessions organised?
4. How are the new teachers assigned to their classes?
5. Do you assign mentors to new teachers?
6. Do you provide administrative support to new teachers?
7. Does every post in your school/district have a detailed job description?
  - a) If yes, are job descriptions known to your individual members of staff?
  - b) If no, why not?
8. Do you use incentives to maintain outstanding teachers' interest in the profession?
  - a) If yes, how?
  - b) If no, why not?
9. In general, are you satisfied with the current criteria applied to recruiting teaching staff for our schools? Why or why not?
10. How would you improve the recruitment and selection process?
11. Do you have any other points you wish to add?