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**Attitudes towards and Perceptions of Women Managers
and Their Communication Competencies
in the Sultanate of Oman**

A thesis

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of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

Attitudes towards and Perceptions of Women Managers and Their Communication Competencies in the Sultanate of Oman

This study was concerned with the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the Sultanate of Oman. In particular, it focused on the attitudes of Omani people towards women as managers and the perceptions of these managers' communication competencies. It also explored reasons for the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions.

The study investigated the topic through a feminist-research lens and used a mixed-method approach that included both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect the data. For quantitative data, a questionnaire survey was conducted on a convenience sample of 208 participants from the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman. The survey included two different tests: the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) and the Communication Competencies of Women Managers Scale (CCWMS). For qualitative data, 12 Omani males and females from the Ministry were interviewed in order to gain in-depth information to complement the qualitative data. The survey data were analysed using the SPSS program while the interview transcripts were analysed using the thematic analysis technique to capture major themes that emerged from the data.

The survey findings showed, first, that participants held both positive attitudes towards women in managerial positions and positive perceptions of women managers' communication competencies. Second, gender was not found to have significant influence on either the attitudes or the perceptions of communication competencies. Prior experience with women managers, on the other hand, did have significant influence on participants' perception of women managers' communication competencies but not on the attitudes towards these managers. The findings also indicated that there was a weak correlation between attitudes towards women managers and the perceptions of their communication competences. Finally, the findings showed a significant relationship between satisfaction of working with women managers and attitudes towards women

managers, while there was no relationship between attitudes and being overseas.

Thematic analysis of the interviews showed that the level of representation of women in managerial positions in Oman could be influenced by many factors educational, Managerial (professional), psychological, familial, societal, and religious.

The contribution of this research lies in the following areas. First, the study helps fill the gap in knowledge identified in the review of the literature. While there is a reasonably volume of research on attitude towards women managers in a number of countries, there has been hardly any in Oman. Second, the study shows that while attitudes and perceptions towards women managers in Oman compare favourably with those in many countries, these positive attitudes and perceptions are far from universal. Some people in Oman still believe that men have more abilities than women and are more suitable to work as managers. Third, the research has highlighted the fact that although Omani women have received a great deal of support and encouragement from the Omani government in recent times, there is still much to be done to achieve proportional representation of men and women in managerial positions.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Although the number of women in the top managerial positions has increased significantly around the world (Eagly, & Karau 2002; Owen, & Todor, 1993; Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, & Smith, 1977), their under-representation in such positions has still been a much debated issue over the last few decades. Many qualities of a successful manager, such as ambition, objectivity and an authoritative manner, have been linked with masculinity (Guney, Gohar, Akinci, & Akinci, 2006). The traditional “great man” model of management (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007) is still prevalent. Men have been seen as better suited than women to work in executive management positions and many people believe that men are more appropriate than women in leadership positions (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007).

In both developing and developed countries, stereotypes about women as managers have continued to be an obstacle in the way of women achieving leadership positions (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). Women, generally, have been classified as having less ability and fewer skills and suitable personal characteristics for managing than men have (Wheless, & Berryman-Fink, 1985). Although the number of women who have graduated from universities has increased dramatically and women make up around half of the global workforce, the number of women in top managerial positions is still too low (Guney, Gohar, Akinci, & Akinci, 2006). Owen and Todor’s (1993) study points out some negative stereotypes about women as managers. First, women tend to place work considerations after family demands. They prefer to spend most of their time looking after their children and their families rather than at work. Second, women lack the necessary drive to succeed in business because they work for supplemental income. Third, women take negative feedback personally rather than professionally. Finally, because women are too emotional and lack aggressiveness and other qualities necessary for managerial positions such as risk-taking and decisiveness, they are unsuitable for top management positions.

Likewise, Guney, Gohar, Akinci, and Akinci (2006) claim that women executives have a self-confidence problem. They are also not motivated through power needs but through affiliation needs and they cannot undertake managerial responsibilities because they are not well educated or experienced. Due to these stereotypes, many people have negative attitudes towards women as managers. According to Owen and Todor (1993), the persistence of negative stereotypes about women as managers is an accepted explanation for the small number of female executives.

In Oman, although women represent nearly 50% of the population, the percentage of Omani women employees in the labour force is only 9.7 per cent (Al-Mandhry, 2000). The primary role of women in Oman, as in many other Islamic countries, is one of wife and mother. Therefore, many employers assume that these roles will interfere with women working and success in leadership positions. They also tend to give priority to men in terms of employment and promotion even if there are many women who have the same qualifications (McElwee, & Al- Riyami, 2003).

This introduction chapter will focus on the context of the study and the reasons for undertaking this research, and also the significance of this study.

1.2 Context

Wendell Philips (1958, As cited in Donn and Issan, 2007) described Omani women as “the silent ones”. He says: “In terms of personality, of economy, of politics and civics, there are no women in Oman. Women exist in numbers always greater than men, but their existence is domestic” (p. 176).

However, in the last four decades there have been dramatic changes in the positions and roles of women in Oman. Since the establishment of “modern” Oman in the early 1970s, Omani women have received a great deal of attention from His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and his government. Sultan Qaboos has been a firm believer that women have as much to offer Oman as men, as evidenced in his statement below:

“We call upon Omani women everywhere, in the villages and the cities, in both urban and Bedu communities, in the hills and mountains, to roll up

their sleeves and contribute to the process of economic and social development ...We have great faith in the educated young Omani women to work devotedly to assist their sisters in their local communities to develop their skills and abilities, both practically and intellectually, in order to contribute to our Omani Renaissance which demands the utilization of our entire national genius, for the realization of our country's glory and prosperity. We call upon Omani women to shoulder this vital role in the community and we are confident that they will respond to this call". (Al Khaduri, 2007, p. 1)

Recently, women in Oman have gained many rights which enable them to work side by side with men. First, Al Khaduri (2007) mentions that up until 1970, girls did not have access to an education, while now free education has been provided to all students, and the enrolment rates have been fairly equal for both genders. In some cases, the proportion of females enrolled in the university has exceeded that of males. Second, all present laws and legislations in Oman offer equal opportunities to women in trade, labour, civil service and social insurance, which qualify women to work in different positions. Consequently, there are now nine women serving in the *Majlis A-Dawla* (State Council), and two ambassadors, to the Netherlands and to the United States. Furthermore, in the Gulf, Oman is the only government which has appointed four women to ministerial positions: Higher Education, Tourism, Social Development, and the Presidency of the Public Authority for Craft Industries.

Gender equality also has been guaranteed by Oman's Basic Law of the State (1996), while a number of articles give Omani women a say in decisions that influence their lives such as marriage, divorce and child custody, which have been included in the Personal Status Law of 1997. Similarly, equality between the sexes in job opportunity, rights and obligations, and protection and privileges have also been provided by the Omani Labour Law of 1973. Finally, in the Civil Service Law, the government provides equality for both sexes in the recruitment process based on competence and employment entitlements such as promotion, salary, leave and allowances. Despite all these efforts, until recent time, girls in some local communities have been discouraged by tradition and marriage to study or to take up the opportunities of education at home or travel

overseas for education. Nevertheless, nowadays women in the Sultanate of Oman are able to have their education both at home and abroad to obtain the qualifications necessary to join the workforce and to play a major role in their society (Donn, & Issan, 2007).

Despite this support for women, there is a lack of representation of women in managerial positions in the Sultanate of Oman. Although women in the Sultanate of Oman represent almost 50 percent of the Omani population, they are still under-represented in both the workforce and top management positions. The table in the next page, sourced from the Statistical Year Book (February, 2009) on the Ministry of National Economy website, illustrates some percentages of women in managerial positions in the Sultanate of Oman:

Table 1. Civil Service Omani Employees Occupying Leading and Supervision Posts 2008

position	Women	Men	Total	Percentages of
				women
Undersecretary	1	33	34	2.9
Secretary-General	-	9	9	-
Governor	-	2	2	-
Governor Deputy	-	2	2	-
Ambassador	2	39	41	4.9
Consultant	15	181	196	7.7
Expert	22	200	222	9.9
Mayor	-	59	59	-
General Supervisor	-	16	16	-
General Manager	13	188	201	6.5
General Manager Deputy	12	108	120	10.0
Minister Office Deputy	2	13	15	13.3
Department. Manager	89	1203	1292	6.9
Department. Manager Deputy & its level	50	347	397	12.6
Head Section	302	3333	3635	8.3
Total	509	5895	6404	7.9

Table 1 illustrates that there is a clear disparity between Omani males and females in terms of representation in managerial positions. This disparity between genders extends, according to the Ministry of National Economy, includes several leadership positions. According to the statistical data, the percentage of representation of women in Leading and Supervision Posts, ranging from 5 to 10% percent, this percentage slightly go up in lower managerial levels.

In order to provide an explanation of this under-representation of women in the Sultanate of Oman, the current study aimed to investigate the perceptions of Omani women as managers and the perceptions of their communication competencies, as well as the influence of gender and work experience with women managers on these perceptions. The research also examined the relationship between attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of communication competencies. The study investigated the topic through a feminist-research lens and used a mixed-method approach that included both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect the data.

1.3 Significance of the study

The information gathered from this study will be useful for government and many organisations which concerned with the status of women in Oman and Arabian Gulf area. In fact, there is a need for such information, for example on December 21, 2008 the third regional meeting of women parliamentarians and leaders of annual Gulf Cooperation Council Countries to the Arab Gulf States was hosted by the *Shura Council* in the Sultanate of Oman and convened to discuss the situation of women in the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC). The most important plans of action emerging from the meetings were; first, GCC have to examine the causes of lack of political participation of women in the GCC countries in the political sphere parliamentary candidates and voters. Second, they aim to raise the proportion of women represented in parliament and decision-making positions in the GCC States. Third, they have to highlight the roles of women in society and enable them politically, socially and economically. Fourth, working to effect changes in attitudes and ideas about women prevailing among members of society by looking at the issue of women as an integral part of community issues and emphasise the idea that the

advancement of any society is not only with the participation of women. Finally, GCC have to change the culture prevailing negative about the role of women, and the emphasis on their ability to work and production (Majles Al'shura, 2008).

This study aims to highlight the perceptions about women managers and the perceptions of their communication competencies. This information about perceptions of women managers will assist the government and other organisations to establish their programs to support women in managerial positions based on their knowledge of the prevailing perceptions in society. This study also will provide perceptions about factors that impede women's access to these positions in terms of management and communication.

In addition, the results of this study will assist women to avoid and to change some negative perceptions and attitudes through their work in managerial positions or through their dealing with people. For example, if this study show there is a lack of confident or communication skills, based on these results Omani women can improve their abilities in order to avoid these negative perceptions. This avoidance will empower women to be in leadership positions.

1.4 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows: First, the introduction chapter explains the aim of conducting this research and states why I am interested in studying perceptions of women managers. Chapter 2 will review relevant literature including literature on attitudes towards women as managers in Arab and Islamic countries, and the study's research questions. Chapter 3 presents the research design used in this study. This includes the research methodology and methods including ethical considerations and a description of the research process. The fourth chapter presents the research findings including the quantitative and qualitative results. In chapter five I discuss the findings as they relate to the literature in this area. The final chapter sums up the findings and limitations of the study, and provides some recommendations to initiate change and the conclusions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter situates the study within the relevant literature on attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of their communication competencies. Further, it provides the framework for carrying out this study. First, I explore the literature on theoretical perspectives about women in management. Second, I examine the literature on under-representation of women in leadership positions. Third, I focused on the obstacles in women's paths to leadership positions including gender stereotypes and discrimination towards women managers before going on to review literature on attitudes towards women as managers in general and in Arabic and Islamic countries specifically. Then I discuss the situation women in the Sultanate of Oman. Next, I focus both on literature relating to communication competences and literature that links communication competencies and attitudes towards women as managers. Finally, based on the literature review I conclude this chapter by introducing the research questions.

2.1 Research on Women in Management: Theoretical Perspectives

Researchers have used different theoretical approaches in order to study women's under-representation in organisational roles associated with power or status (Fagenson, 1990). As Fagenson pointed out, to explain the lack of women in organisations' top corporate tiers, scholars have employed many theoretical frameworks such as the gender-centered perspective, the organisational structure perspective, and the gender-organisation-system perspective (GOS). The gender-centered perspective attributes women's behaviour and limited representation in upper-level jobs to internal factors in women, such as their "inappropriate" traits, cognitions, attitudes and behaviours (Fagenson, 1990). Hall-Taylor (1997) pointed out that to explain the marginalisation of women in senior management, proponents of a gender-centred perception argue that gender influences men's and women's behaviours, attitudes, traits, and so on. The image of a good leader in our society is a person who is aggressive, forceful, rational, competitive, decisive,

strong, self-confident, and independent, while women, according to the gender-centered perspective, have been personified as being comparatively submissive, passive and non-rational in conflict situations, and they tend to be warm, kind and selfless (Fagenson, 1990).

Organisational structure is another perspective used to explain women's limited corporate progression and their behaviour in organisations. In this paradigm scholars explain these limitations by emphasising the organisational structure within which women work (Fagenson, 1990). They assume that "individuals' positions in organisational opportunity structures and the amount of power they exert in their jobs" (p. 269) are the variables that are considered critical in explaining why women have not risen to the top of the leadership positions as men have. In other words, according to Fagenson (1990) in an organisation there are two types of positions: advantageous and disadvantageous. In advantageous positions managers have occupants' opportunity power, where they can make effective decisions in organisations. These positions are socially associated with males. Disadvantageous positions, on the other hand, provide to their occupants little power or opportunity, and they are socially linked with females. As a result, sex differences in attitudes, behaviours, and cognitions towards women in leadership positions, in this paradigm, are attributed to the differences in numbers and positions, and in the opportunity and power structures between men and women, rather than gender.

The gender-organisation-system perspective is the last theoretical framework that is influencing the thought of women-in-management researchers to understand women's under-representation in organisational roles. This framework is associated with power or status. According to Yukongdi and Benson (2005), referencing the gender-organisation-system frame work, women under-representation and under-utilised can be attributed to many factors. First, women have been located in disadvantaged positions. Second, women are socialised to display traits, behaviour, attitudes, which are incompatible with leadership positions. Fagenson (1990) also points out that women's behaviour and limited corporate progression in organisations can be attributed to their gender, the organisational context and the larger social and institutional systems in which they function. This approach adds a new factor to those which have

previously been discussed in the gender-centered and the organisation structure paradigms to explain women's behaviour and limited corporate progression in organisations, which is the social and institutional systems in which organisations are situated.

Using these theories, many researchers have conducted studies to test their validity and to examine the reasons behind the under-representation of women in managerial positions. In the next section I review some studies that have examined the phenomenon of under-representation of women in managerial and leadership positions.

2.2 Under-representation of women in leadership positions

Representation of women in managerial positions has been a subject of many studies (Deal, & Stevenson 1998; Huffman 1999; Olsson & Walker, 2003; Sartore, & Cunningham 2007). Despite governments having passed positive legislation for the advancement of women in leadership positions around the globe, women are still under-represented in managerial positions, (Deal, & Stevenson 1998; Huffman 1999; Olsson & Walker, 2003; Sartore, & Cunningham 2007). For example, Crampton and Mishra (1999) pointed out that, in the United States, women filled only 15 percent of all managerial positions in 1970. This figure rose to more than 40 percent by 1989, and up to about 63 percent of the total work force. However, only six percent women were classified as middle level managers represented. In 1999 only three of every one hundred top jobs were held by women in the largest U.S. companies, which was similar to the number of the previous decade (Crampton & Mishra, 1999).

Australia and New Zealand are further examples of the under-representation of women in leadership positions. As Still (2006) found, very few women are attaining executive management or board positions in Australia's top 200 companies, which represent 90 per cent of the nation's market capitalisation. In 2004, they held only 10.2 percent of executive managerial positions, 8.6 percent of board directorships, and only four women held a chief executive officer position in the top 200 companies. From 708,600 governmental managerial positions, women held only 26 per cent of them compared with 74 per cent for

men. In New Zealand, according to Olsson and Walker (2003), although women make up 47 per cent of the working population, only 6.5 per cent of them are in management positions compared with males, who comprise 15 per cent in the top 500 of companies. Furthermore, in the New Zealand public sector, while women comprise 56 per cent of the labour force, only 7 per cent are in the management group (compared with 13 per cent of males), and they represent only one-third of the senior managers.

In Great Britain, according to McDonald (2004), women represent only 33 per cent of managerial positions, while they constitute 45 percent of the workforce. They make up only 26 percent of department heads, 16 percent of function heads, and only 10 percent of directors. Further examination of managerial occupations shows that women are employed as managers in the private sector less often than in the public sector, there is a large gender pay gap in management positions (30 percent in favour of men), and women managers are less likely to be married and have dependent children than male managers (McDonald, 2004).

Similarly, Asian economies are another example of under-representation of women managers. The rates of participation of women in the labour force are ranked among the world's highest. For example, in 2000 they represented around 64 per cent of labour force in 2000 (Yukongdi, & Benson, 2005). However, they still exist in low numbers in managerial positions, which renders them almost invisible in leadership positions (Adler, 1993; Benson & Yukongdi, 2005; Yukongdi & Benson, 2005).

In the Middle East, although there are significant achievements in advancing women in leadership and political roles, there are still institutional and cultural obstacles in women's path in business systems (Metcalf, 2008). Metcalf argues that in the Arab region, women's current labour participation rate has seen a tremendous increase of 47 per cent between 1960 and 2000. In the last few years the developments of women in the political arena has been significant. Women in ministerial positions in the sultanate of Oman, for example, currently number more than those in the UK and USA (Metcalf, 2008).

Literature has also suggested different explanations for the under-representation of women in higher leadership positions. According to Claes (1999), this under-representation of women in top management positions is because of a lack of confidence and aspirations, and the additional pressures. Females in managerial positions are often faced pressure and responsibilities from both work and home and also the social environment, and that are not experienced by male managers. The way women act and react in organisations has been put forward as another reason for the relative absence of women from top management positions. Women, it is claimed (Claes, 1999), often do not tend to behave in an authoritarian way, and they do not use imperatives; therefore, tasks become requests. To avoid conflicts in organisations, women behave in an unaggressive way and they frequently say “sorry...” because they feel responsible. Women also tend to be available and their door is always open, and they value the relationship; therefore, they get personally involved. Finally, women want to be nice; as a result, they attribute their success to others, seek approval, fear abuse of power, smile, and are indirect and hesitant (Claes, 1999).

Additionally, to explain the under-representation of women in managerial positions, Huffman (1999) studied the organisational-level factors which facilitate or hinder the inclusion of women in management positions by examining 552 service sectors and manufacturing work establishments in the United States. The author argues that “macro level organisational variables impinge on personnel decisions about the staffing of managerial positions, thereby influencing women’s representation in such jobs” (p. 738). The results show that first, factors such as the percentage of women in nonmanagement positions and the institutional environment have a strongest effect on female representation in management. Second, the organisational age has a strong curvilinear effect. Third, firm size and the presence of formalised human resource policies markedly differ by industrial sector. Finally, the results show that source policies do not have any influence on promoting equal opportunities in the workforce. Although Huffman’s study shows the factors affecting the representation of women in managerial positions, it did not provide reasons or explanations how these effects could influence the women's representation in managerial positions.

The women's abilities are another reason for the under-representation of women in leadership positions. For example, the under-representation of women in New Zealand has been attributed to their lack of training and experience in line management, to their family responsibilities, and a lack of the traits of leadership (Olsson & Walker, 2003). Therefore, they do not choose to be in leadership positions, and they choose to be invisible when they are in leadership roles. Lawn-Day and Ballard (1996) added that it is possible to categorise the barriers that stand in the way of representation of women into three groups: the lack of qualities required to advancement, organisational obstacles preventing the advancement of women, and societal factors disrupting the upward mobility of women.

The educational level of women is another factor of under-representation. Although the number of women graduates has increased steadily their low educational qualification is still continue (Gale & Cartwright, 1995; Lawn-Day & Ballard, 1996). According to Lawn-Day and Ballard (1996), most studies concerning the qualifications of women usually show their limited knowledge base or negative perception of their sense of professional commitment. Gale and Cartwright (1995) also pointed out that under-representation of women in the top management positions has been attributed to a lack of education, skills and training; bias and discrimination and/or the operation of corporate policies and procedures that make it difficult for women to be in the top positions.

Cultural and religious traditions are another explanation for women's under-representation and underutilisation in management. Adler (1993) argues that because all Asian cultures are collective and familial, it is expected that women will give their utmost attention to their home and children. Religions such as Confucianism, which influenced Chinese and Japanese culture, socialise women to be shy, unassertive, and obedient to men. The Japanese have not perceived women as authority figures nor as decision makers (Adler, 1993). When women become managers in China, Chinese men tend to use the following folk saying to describe the situation: "a donkey taking the place of a horse, which can only lead to trouble" (Croll, 1977, p. 591).

Ross (2008) argues that women in the Middle East have made less progress towards gender equality than in any other region. The under-representation of

women in the workforce and government has been attributed to the oil, gender work structure, and gender cultural practice (Metcalf, 2008; Ross, 2008). Ross asserts that oil production in the Middle East leads to reduced numbers of women in the labour force. Oil leads to social and political consequences. Socially, oil has led to higher fertility rates, less education for women, and less female influence within their families. The dependence of the oil sector on male workers is due to physical capacity needed by this sector, and the long periods spent working, which are not commensurate with the nature of women. This situation led to many Political consequences. Only a few women work outside their home, therefore, “they are less likely to exchange information and overcome collective action problems; less likely to mobilise politically, and to lobby for expanded rights; and less likely to gain representation in government” (Ross, 2008, p.107).

The Islamic religion is one of the strongest factors in the cultures of Arab and Islamic societies, which has a direct or indirect influence on the representation of women in managerial positions. Some people tend to attribute under-representation of women in these positions to the teachings of Islam, while others argue that Islamic religion provides freedom and equality to women compared to women’s lives before Islam. The influence of Islam on women’s lives has been widely addressed (Al-Lamki, 1999; Marmenout, 2009; Sidani, 2004; Smith, 1979; Sidani & Gardner, 2000; Smith, 2008; Syed, 2007). According to Smith (2008), in the Islamic world, as in other religious worlds, most traditional gender roles have been developed based on understandings of religious texts developed within the cultural settings in which these religions took root. The gender roles in the Muslim tradition, similar to traditional Catholicism, have been developed based on contemporary gender-based divisions, which focus on women’s traditional roles around the extended family. To justify such traditional gender roles, many people continue to use once-presupposed religious forms. However, others believe that the impetus for the perception of many recent forms of change, and greater gender equality, can be provided by the same scriptures and wider religious traditions. Similarly, just as the Bible has motivated social transformation during periods of profound social and cultural transformation in Europe and North America, the Qur’an (the holy book of Muslims) and Hadith (a record of the prophet Mohammed's

life, actions, and deeds) provide encouragement for Muslims dedicated to gender equality and social justice.

Smith (2008) pointed out that in the old Arabic tribal system before Islam, people were facing hardships in life, especially in the desert of Arabia, and there were constant difficulties in relations among the tribes. As a result, strong and powerful support was required to cope with this life. Automatically, because of their physical abilities, males become an important resource in the economic, social, and defensive lives of their families and tribes. The importance of males has become a feature of Arab society because it is a reflection of what provides the strength and success in the society, and because cultural norms usually are not proven values of abstract ideals, they are proven values of actual utility. Therefore, men were essential for the survival and growth of the tribe in the particular context of the Arabs of the seventh century. They were the warriors and leaders in culture, and the society relied on them for economic survival and raiding other tribes. Women, on the other hand, were valued for their role in creating and sustaining the family. However, women could also become liabilities, during times of chronic famine, overpopulation, and endemic tribal warfare. Considering the values of that period, women could bring shame to the tribe, if they were taken as slaves in war or married to a man of inferior class. In addition, in the west, the traditional patriarchal family structure was based on the equal distribution of authority and judgment and centralised between the father and the mother of the family in terms of the breadwinner and economic foundations. However, the changes in economics, culture, and politics have enabled and encouraged the education and economic independence of women. These changes have transformed the position and perception of women throughout the world. In recent decades, this new way of perceiving women has only started to reach populations in most Muslim countries Smith (2008).

Syed (2007) asserts that regarding the women's right to seek employment, although Islam regards women's role as a mother and a wife as the most sacred and essential one, there is no verdict in Islam which prohibits women from seeking employment, especially in positions which fit their nature such as nursing and teaching. Furthermore, it must be noted that according to Islam, a

woman's income, whether through inheritance or employment, remains completely hers and no one can make any claim on it including her father and her husband.

Nowadays, according to Smith (2008), although many Muslims accept the fundamental equality of males and females, they qualify their understanding with the concept of complementarity. This complementarity relates to pre-modern cultures and is based on the idea that women and men have different gifts and therefore they have different socio-economic roles. The role of women is to stay at home and care for the family, while that for men is to engage in work, society and politics. From that perspective, a restricted role for women within the community has been frequently prescribed by the dominant form of Islam. "Many authors (mostly male in pre-modern times) have interpreted the faith in light of this prevailing socio-cultural view with deleterious consequences for women" (Smith, 2008, p.59).

2.3 Barriers to women's leadership in management

Several obstacles exist to the emergence of women in managerial positions including gender role stereotyping and discrimination. In the following section, I review the literature on each barrier.

2.3.1 Gender role stereotypes

Gender stereotypes have been defined as "categorical beliefs regarding the traits and behavioural characteristics ascribed to individuals based on their gender" (Ginige, 2007, p. 3), or "a set of attributes ascribed to a group and believed to characterise its individual members simply because they belong to that group" (Heilman, 1997, p. 979). The influence of gender stereotypes on diversity between males and females in organisations has been widely documented by numerous researchers (Dubno, 1985; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Ginige, 2007; Hayes & Allinson, 2004; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007; Maher, 1997; Mihail, 2006a; Mihail, 2006b; Schein & Mueller, 1992; Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, & Smith, 1977). These stereotypes in organisations have been regarded as one of the direct antecedents of discrimination at work, and people can expect the

attributes and behaviours of individual group members from association with gender stereotypes.

The literature suggests that one reason for women's under-representation is due to gender role stereotypes. Furthermore, it has also been suggested that the traditional social roles, status differences, and power inequalities that exist between men and women have been embodied by gender stereotypes. Prime, Jonsen, Carter, and Maznevski (2008) believe that the influence of these stereotypes can be represented on two important patterns. First, the qualities that people associate with women are totally different from those which people associate with leaders. Second, the qualities which people associate with men are similar to those which they associate with leaders. Men tend to be seen as naturally equipped to lead, because of this match between stereotypically masculine attributes and idealised leadership. This tendency has been called "think-manager-think-male" (Prime et al, 2008).

In addition, gender stereotypes have consistently shown that women are generally seen as more expressive and communal than men, while men are seen as more competent than women. The mismatch between the qualities traditionally associated with women and those traditionally associated with leadership is one of the most intractable obstacles for women seeking positions of influence (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). There is a widely held view that successful managers have to be aggressive, forceful, competitive, self-confident, and independent. Most managers' positive characteristics have been associated with masculine traits and people continue to credit men with leadership ability. According to Sartore and Cunningham (2007), although stereotypical beliefs held towards women such as being helpful, warm, kind, and gentle may be perceived as positive in content, they can undoubtedly possess negative consequences when they are linked with people in managerial positions. Men, in contrast, are commonly linked with characteristics highlighting one's competence level such as being confident, strong, assertive, and independent. Sartore, and Cunningham also explain the under-representation of women in leadership positions in organisations, in general, and sport organisations, in particular. They assert that the capabilities of females within the sport context, specifically in response to the lower levels of

societal power and status afforded to women, have been limited by gender-role meanings and stereotypes associated with social and sport ideology.

Some literature has also examined the changes of attitudes and gender stereotypes over time (Duchr & Bono, 2006; Owen & Todor, 1993; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent 2002). To explore the assumption that negative stereotypes persist among managers today, Owen and Todor (1993) studied the difference in attitudes towards women managers of human resources professionals and undergraduate business students. Using Women as Managers Scale (WAMS), Owen and Todor found that attitudes held by human resources professionals are significantly more positive than those held by the undergraduate students. The WAMS score for women was significantly higher than the scores for men. The authors attribute these differences to the training that HR professionals have, on the one hand, and the lack of experience on the part of the students, on the other. The result of this study shows that the potential for discrimination against women as managers may not disappear when all of the older students or generation retire as some people may think.

Similarly, Powell, Butterfield, and Parent (2002) examined the changes in men's and women's stereotypes of managers to see if there was less emphasis placed on managers' possessing masculine characteristics in 1999 compared with studies conducted between 1984 and 1985 (such as Powell & Butterfield (1989)) and studies conducted between 1976 and 1977 (such as Powell & Butterfield (1979)). The research sample was selected from two American universities from two groups of subjects who differed in average age (21.2 years old and 31.7 years), education, and work experience. The results indicate that a good manager is still perceived as predominantly masculine, although managerial stereotypes place less emphasis on masculine characteristics than in earlier studies (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002).

However, Duehr and Bono (2006) argue that gender stereotypes of women managers are, in some ways, support them in leadership positions. By using a revised version of the Descriptive Index Survey, they examined gender and management stereotypes of males and females in the 21st century. The results, based on 620 managers and 687 students over the last 30 years, show that stereotypes about women as managers may be changing, especially among male

managers, who seem to perceive women as less passive and submissive and more confident, ambitious, analytical, and assertive than men. Male managers are more likely to perceive women as leaders more often than they did both 15 and 30 years ago. However, male students today still hold the same gender stereotypes as those of male managers 15 years ago. The results also show that males continue to characterise women managers as possessing fewer of the characteristics of successful managers, although those respondents who have positive experiences of working with women managers are likely to rate women higher on management characteristics (Duehr & Bono, 2006).

2.3.2 Gender discrimination

Many studies have cited discrimination as one form of barrier on women's path to leadership positions, and as a social phenomenon this has been studied from different perspectives (Blum, Fields, & Goodman, 1994; Gelfand, & Nishii, 2007; Heilman, 1997; Owen & Todor 1993; Maznevski, 2008; Prime, Jonsen, Carter, & Tharenou, 1999). Owen and Todor (1993) pointed out, that negative stereotypes about women as managers usually cause a form of discrimination which is subtle and thus hard to identify. Discrimination happens by treating women differently from men and it occurs when people perceive female managers as different from males. This treatment is seen as both logical and rational by people who hold negative stereotypes about women managers. Subtle discrimination may take many shapes; for example, based on the assumption that women prefer family commitments, managers may decide to hand over an important task to a man rather than to a woman. Beliefs about degree of fit are another form of subtle discrimination. Perceptions that women will somehow change the management process by virtue of their gender lead women to be excluded from senior management positions (Owen & Todor, 1993).

Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) argue that discrimination against women occurs in terms of the devaluation of their performance and unfavourable attribution of their work, in selection, placement, salary fixation, and appraisal decisions in organisations. They assert that experiences of working with women managers can make changes to the underlying stereotypical attitudes, and these attitudes

could support the discrimination towards women managers. They studied the relationship between greater experiential exposure (interaction and attitudes), and they hypothesised that attitudes towards women managers can be influenced by the amount of information which men gain in dealing with women managers. Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) used two different scales to measure the extent of interaction and satisfaction with interaction, and used WAMS to measure the attitudes of 101 male managers towards women as managers. They measured the relationship between the frequency of interaction (between male managers and female managers) and their attitudes towards women managers on the one hand, and the relationship between the male managers' satisfaction of interacting with these women managers and their attitudes towards women managers on the other hand. The results indicate that there are no significant correlations between the frequency of interactions with women managers and attitudes. The results also show there are significant correlations between the satisfaction of males' managers with their interactions with women managers and favourable attitudes towards women managers, which means greater satisfaction is associated with more positive attitudes towards women as managers.

Organisational policies are another factor that may lead to sexism and discrimination against women. Within the working environment, organisational policies such as recruitment and selection policies, promotion policies, work-life balance and mentoring policies may play a role in discrimination towards women managers. According to Cross and Linehan (2006) senior management may decide on the organisational policies and procedures which act effectively as a transparent barrier for female managers in an organisation. Many organisations do not have clear selection criteria for promotion to management level, and there is considerable scope for discretion by senior managers. This discretion is likely to be affected by their personal views, stereotypes, and attitudes towards women. Taking a qualitative approach, Cross and Linehan (2006) explored the experience of 20 female junior and middle managers to examine the barriers to advancing female careers and to enhance the understanding of the scarcity of senior female managers in the high-tech sector in Ireland. The results of the interviews show that a combination of formal and informal organisational policies and procedures to gather with a self-imposed

glass ceiling impede women in junior and middle management positions from promotion to senior managerial roles (Cross & Linehan, 2006).

Similarly, Eagly (2007) points out that in male-dominated and masculine leadership roles, women fare less well than men, and they experience barriers that men do not face. They argue that in both accessing male-dominated leader roles and in evaluations of their performance when they are in such roles, women have been treated differently from men and they indeed face disadvantages as managers. To support this argument, Eagly deduces the attitudes towards female and male leaders from a national poll in the USA between 1975 and 2006. People were asked the following question: “If you were taking a new job and had your choice of boss, would you prefer to work for a man or a woman?” (p. 7). The results show that from 1953 to 2006 there was a preference for male bosses over female bosses. However, the preference for a male boss had a sharp decrease between 2000 and 2002, but rose to 37% in 2006, compared with only 19% of those who preferred a female boss. Forty three per cent chose “it doesn’t matter” if the boss was male or female.

In 1996 and 2006 respondents were asked if America was ready for a women president, only 40% agreed in 1996, while 55% agreed in 2006. Participants were also asked if they would vote for a well-qualified woman nominated for president by their own party. The answer to this question refers to the increase in the rate of approval from only 33% in 1937 to 92% in 2006. Eagly observes that in recent years there is evidence that women are slightly preferred in some elections. However, although attitudes have changed greatly over the years, attitudes not only still limit women accessing leadership positions, but can also foster discriminatory evaluations when they occupy such positions. People who support opportunities for women in leadership endorse less traditional gender roles and approve of women’s paid employment.

2.4 Attitudes towards women as managers

The literature that focuses on attitudes towards women managers is now extensive and spans many countries including Greece, Turkish, Hong Kong, Republic of China, Chile, the USA, Pakistan, and the UAE and numerous studies have been conducted (Beutell, 1984; Chow, 1995; Yan Wu, Hwang, &

Scherer, 2007; Cordano, Scherer, & Owen, 2002; Guney, Gohar, Akinci, & Akinci, 2006; Mihail, 2006a; Mihail, 2006b; Prime, Jonsen, Carten, & Maznevski, 2008; Sakalli-Ugurlu & Beydogan, 2002). Many of these studies reveal the relationship between gender and culture in attitudes towards women's management.

Generally, there are significant negative attitudes towards women as managers. For example, Mihail's (2006b) study used the "Women as Managers Scales" (WAMS) to investigate the attitudes of 323 undergraduate business students at the University of Macedonia in Greece towards women in management. The results show that gender is the most influential factor in shaping attitudes towards women in management; and male business students compared with female students have more negative stereotypical attitudes towards women as managers. There are no significant differences on other variables such as age, work experience and cooperation with female supervisors.

However, there are some reported positive attitudes towards women as managers. Although women comprise 37 per cent of Hong Kong's total workforce, they only hold 20 per cent of the managerial positions. Chow's (1995) study used the WAMS to investigate the attitudes of 82 middle managers of both sexes in Hong Kong. The study found that there were positive attitudes towards women in the workforce in Hong Kong. The study also found that there was no evidence of gender differences in terms of achievement, ability, performance, or other related skills. Furthermore, respondents believed that an equal opportunity should be given to both males and females and women had the capability to obtain the essential skills to be successful managers. In order to be in top management positions, it is acceptable for women to compete with men, and, finally, women have the self-confidence which is required to be a good leader (Chow, 1995).

Bowen, Yan Wu, Hwang, and Scherer (2007) made a comparison between students' and workers' attitudes towards women as managers in the Republic of China. WAMS was used to investigate the attitudes of 502 students from four different universities in Beijing and 385 employees from the People's Bank of China (PBC). WAMS was translated into Chinese using the back-translation procedure. The study found that although university students and workers

shared the same culture, tradition, language, and were governed by the same laws, they had different attitudes. Students believed that the most important component in their attitudes is “society’s acceptance of women as managers” (p. 277), while the most important component in workers’ attitudes was “the perception of women’s ability to succeed as managers” (p. 277). The study also found that gender had a strong effect on attitudes towards women as managers. Females had much more positive, liberal, and egalitarian attitudes towards women as managers than men do. Both young male students and older male workers had the same attitudes towards women as managers (Bowen, Yan Wu, Hwang, & Scherer, 2007).

Comparative studies serve to examine the influence of many variables in attitudes towards women's work as managers, in order to explore the impact of these attitudes and the strength of their effects. There is no doubt that the knowledge of the extent of this influence will assist the ability to change these attitudes and re-formulate them in the community. Therefore, studying attitudes towards women as managers in different countries, which differ in language and culture, has been also addressed (Cordano, Scherer, & Owen, 2002; Guney, Gohar, Akinci, & Akinci, 2006). To learn more about the impact of differences between cultures on attitudes towards women as managers, Cordano, Scherer, and Owen (2002) conducted a study in Chile and the USA, countries which use different languages (Spanish and English respectively). Across both cultures, the study employed the WAMS to examine two different coherent measures: “acceptance” and “ability” of women as managers. Participants in this study were 412 undergraduate business administration students. One hundred ninety four were selected from a large Midwestern university in the USA, while 218 were from a large university in the eight regions of Chile.

The results showed that there were no significant cultural differences in the acceptance of women as managers while there were significant differences in acceptance according to gender. USA females have more positive attitudes towards women as managers. On the acceptance variable there was very little difference between females in the USA and Chile. There was less acceptance of women as managers by both Chilean and the USA males compared with females. The lowest score on both ability and acceptance was made by Chilean

males who presented the least favourable attitudes towards women as managers. Cordano, Scherer, and Owen (2002) conclude that “sex is a much greater influence on one’s attitudes towards women managers than the cultural differences between the USA and Chile” (Cordano, Scherer, & Owen, 2002, p56).

Similarly, Prime, Jonsen, Carten, and Maznevski, (2008) examined the perceptions of 1165 managers (340 female and 747 male) from four Western European cultural groups about women’s and men’s leadership. These four cultural groups are Latin (which includes France, Italy, and Spain), Germanic (which includes Germany and the Netherlands), Anglo (which includes the United Kingdom and the United States), and finally Nordic (which includes Denmark, Norway, and Sweden). The authors used the Cultural Perspective Questionnaire (CPQ) to examine managers’ perceptions of women and men leaders, and the environment subscale to measure whether social behaviour is attributable to the internal characteristic of individuals or the social environment. The results show that stereotyping of women’s and men’s leadership is widespread among managers and perceptions more often vary by the gender of respondents than by their culture. Across cultures, female respondents believed that women leaders were more effective than men in seven areas: consulting, providing intellectual stimulation, monitoring, planning, problem-solving, rewarding, and role-modelling. They were also in agreement about men’s superior performance at networking and influencing upward. In contrast, male respondents showed more balance in their attributions of superior and inferior performance. They believed that women’s performance is superior to men’s in three areas of leader behaviour: consulting, monitoring, and rewarding while they attributed higher effectiveness to men leaders for four behaviours: influencing upward, problem-solving, providing intellectual stimulation and role-modelling.

Attitudes towards women managers have not only been studied among employees and students, but they have also been explored among predominantly senior staff. Liff, Worrall, and Cooper (1997) used data derived from the Price Waterhouse West Midlands Business Survey, which had been designed to elicit opinions at the senior management level (chairperson, chief

executive, managing director, proprietor) of companies, to examine the attitudes of senior, predominantly male staff towards women managers in the West Midlands region of the UK. The research sample was 200 respondents (100 male and 100 female) from the West Midlands and another 200 respondents (100 male and 100 female) from the Institute of Management.

The results show that both male and female samples share a broad consensus that women managers can bring positive skills to the workplace, although women participants were more assertive than men in this trend. Males and females in both samples believed there was no difference between men and women in the workplace. The vast majority of the research samples disagreed with the statement that there should be positive discrimination for women managers. The results also illustrate that the vast majority of females in both samples think it is acceptable for women to combine a management career and motherhood. Male participants also agreed, but they are more hesitant than women participants, that women should not combine the two activities (work as managers and motherhood). Comparing the two samples, males and females in the Midlands sample were more likely to be more negative about combining a managerial career and motherhood than the respondents from the whole sample of the study. Men also believed that the period of maternity with women could influence the opportunities for women to seek managerial positions. The vast majority of the sample believed that both men and women should receive equal treatment irrespective of family responsibilities. The majority of respondents thought that it is not difficult to work for/with women managers.

Liff, Worrall, and Cooper (1997) extended their data analysis to explore the characteristics of men who had negative attitudes towards women managers. This analysis showed that there is a correlation between an increase in age and negative views. Thirteen per cent of those over 50 years were in the negative core group, while only 5 per cent of those aged between 30 and 39 years old were in the negative core group, and respondents who were under 30 years old made up only a small part of negative core group. The results also show a strong relationship between negative attitudes towards women managers and no or low-level qualifications. That is, members who had low qualifications tended to present more negative attitudes than members who had high qualifications

such as postgraduates and professionals. Regarding the respondents' role within the organisation, chairmen made a high percentage of negative attitudes while sales and marketing directors made the lowest per cent all of negative attitudes. Finally, by industrial sector, members who worked in construction sectors showed more negative attitudes than those who work in manufacturing, retail and distribution, while the lowest score was recorded for the services sector (Liff, Worrall, & Cooper, 1997).

A number of studies have examined the effects of other variables such as age, socialisation, interaction, and patriarchy on attitudes towards women managers. For example, among American undergraduate business and MBA students, Beutell (1984) studied the influence of birth order, gender, and work values on attitudes towards women as managers. By using the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) and the Work Values Inventory (WVI) to measure work values, Beutell showed that women have more positive attitudes towards women managers than men did. The results also illustrate that for undergraduate students, relationship between birth order and sex, and attitudes towards women as managers was found. "Firstborn men had the least favourable attitudes. Also, among firstborn men the sex of the next sibling was related to differences in attitudes towards women in managerial roles." (p. 57). Finally, there was a relationship between the work values of MBA students and their attitudes towards women as managers (Beutell, 1984).

Adayemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz (1997), also using WAMS, examined the attitudes towards woman managers in Nigeria as an example of a developing country. They emphasised the role played by negative stereotypes that men have about women on under-representation of women in managerial position. Two separate samples of Nigerians were chosen to be the subjects of this study. Both samples were conveniently chosen from the south-western part of Nigeria. The first sample consisted of 70 subjects (43 males and 27 females) while the second sample consisted of 61 subjects (39 males and 22 females). The results from the first sample indicated that Nigerian females have more positive attitudes towards women managers than males. The factor analysis of this sample showed that, although there were seven factors, only the first two factors had a significant variance in the data by explaining about 33 per cent of

the overall variance in the data. The first factor contained characteristics that categorised as 'male chauvinism'. It explained about 22 per cent of variance in the data. The second factor was called as 'female liberation' and explained about 11 per cent of the variance. The findings of the second sample illustrated that there were three statistically significant differences between means of males and females on WAMS scales. These results also showed that "Nigerian males may underestimate the degree of the positive attitudes of Nigerian females towards women managers" (Adayemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz, 1997, p. 5).

Research has also investigated the changes in perceptions of women managers over time. Deal and Stevenson's (1998) study uses the Schein Descriptive Index (SDI) to see if perceptions had changed since 1990. To examine the differences of male and female perceptions of male and female managers and managers in general, 702 male and female psychology students were chosen from a large Midwestern university, 86% of whom were reported as having work experience in subordinate positions. The authors focused on the effect of sex of the subject on perceptions of different targets, and how male and female subjects viewed female managers, male managers, and prototypical (nonsex-specified) managers. The results showed that male subjects are more likely to have negative views of female managers than female subjects. The results also indicate that male subjects continue to have negative perceptions of female managers whereas female subjects do not view female managers negatively. Both male and female subjects agree on perceptions of male managers, which show "little concern that male managers are potentially disadvantaged by the increase of women in the workplace" (p. 298). Finally, male subjects are less likely to describe female managers as ambitious, authoritative, competent, direct, firm, intelligent, objective and sophisticated than female subjects, and they tend to describe female managers as bitter, likely to dawdle and procrastinate, deceitful, easily influenced, frivolous, hasty, nervous, passive, shy, and vulgar (Deal & Stevenson, 1998).

Despite the long period of time which has elapsed since women first appeared in managerial positions, it is clear that there are still some negative attitudes towards women as managers. It is also obvious that differences in gender,

culture and country play a prominent role in the different nature of these attitudes towards the presence of women in positions of leadership. Through the review of literature, it is easy to note the adoption by most studies of quantitative approach, while there is a lack of using qualitative approach. The use of interviews will be beneficial and provide an opportunity for deeper knowledge of these perceptions with the interpretation and explanation of the reasons that might stand behind these attitudes.

Most of the studies such as Liff, Worrall, and Cooper (1997) indicated that there have been significant changes in attitudes towards women as managers. At the end of the twentieth century, the situation of the dominance of the masculine style and the resistance to the feminine style in management has been changed. According to Claes (1999), for more than a decade, feminine values such as flexibility, teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, which contrast with the traditional masculine management values such as competitiveness and authoritarianism, have appeared in business. These feminine values were “based on consensual relations and inspire a different management approach to communication, leadership, negotiation, organisation and control” (p. 395). The business world started to turn away from the masculine style which had been derived from the military hierarchy at the end of the Second World War, and some values which have been more closely identified with women—such as the team and supportive behaviours were becoming increasingly more important for management. Furthermore, while women in the 1970s had to adopt the male style if they wanted to be at the top, and the business world was characterised as a “no-women’s-land” Claes (1999), female styles can offer management in organisations some great qualities that are both linked with women and important to organisations. The question here is, what can women offer to organisations?

Grant (1988) argues that there are six important areas where women’s values can influence organisations, for example: communication and cooperation, affiliation and attachment, power, physicality, emotionality, vulnerability and lack of self-confidence. First, in terms of communication competences, Grant believes that women have good communication abilities because they have had a lot of practice from an early age. Instead of getting involved in a

confrontation, women can often find a means of conciliation with others, and women's communication networks in most societies have served as the foundation for social interaction. Women in their conversations tend to take turns in the group, whereas in the men groups there is competition and the winner is the one who will speak. According to Grant, in terms of consultation and democratic decision-making processes, the type of cooperative behaviour style is important to lead to higher morale and greater commitment from people in an organisation. Second, compared with focusing on productivity, competition, egocentricity, and success, dependent characteristics and greater ease with the relational world as it links with women, in general, women managers can help make organisations place in which affiliation, friendship, connection, and personhood are experienced in a more integrated manner. Third, women managers usually use power in organisations as an interdependent relationship and are more likely to acknowledge women's own interdependence. They also tend to use their power with giving and caring or with nurturance and strength, while men use it with aggression and assertion. Finally, although women usually express their vulnerability, their lack of confidence, and their emotions, which are considered "weaknesses", women can work productively with this feeling, and that puts them in a strong position. These situations enable women in organisations to rebuild new strengths on a sturdier basis and they can follow the models presented in management. This expression of emotionality, vulnerability, and helplessness also provides a humanising dimension, which can develop the quality of life in organisations (Grant, 1988).

2.5 Attitudes towards women as managers in Arabic and Islamic countries

Generally, very little known about the attitudes towards women in the Arab and Islamic world. Women in both Islamic and Arabic countries have a unique situation because of differences in cultures and attitudes. As mentioned earlier, according to Ross (2008), women in the Islamic and Middle Eastern countries have made less progress towards equality. Compared with women in other regions of the world, only a few women work outside the home, and fewer hold positions in government (Ross, 2008). This section will examine research which

has been conducted into attitudes towards women as managers in Arabic and Islamic regions.

In one of the Islamic countries, Sakalli-Ugurlu and Beydogan's (2002) research in which they developed a questionnaire to examine the attitudes of 183 Turkish undergraduate students (92 men, 91 women) from the Middle East Technical University towards women as managers. The authors also used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory Scale to measure sexism and developed a scale to measure patriarchy. The study found that "participants who held more favourable attitudes towards patriarchy and who scored high on hostile sexism also held less positive attitudes towards women managers". The results also showed that Turkish males have exhibited less positive attitudes towards women managers than Turkish females who participated (Sakalli-Ugurlu, & Beydogan, 2002, p. 647).

In a comparison study, Guney, Gohar, Akinici, and Akinici (2006) examined managerial attitudes towards women managers in a cross-cultural comparison between Turkey and Pakistan. Participants in this study were 219 academics (research assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors) who worked in the universities in Turkey and Pakistan. By responding to the "Managerial Attitudes towards Women Executives Scale" (MATWES), participants in the two countries presented significant differences in several managerial attitudes towards women managers. In Turkey both males and females have negative attitudes towards women managers, and women showed more negative attitudes than men. The authors attributed the negative attitude of Turkish males and females to the negative attitudes towards their organisations and their heads of department in general. Further, women have more negative attitudes than men because they work as a transmission of their culture, which affects the culture of Turkish society. In contrast, the Pakistani women had a more favourable attitude than men had, and Pakistani men presented more positive attitudes than Turkish males' and females' attitudes. The authors attributed these positive attitudes toward women managers with Pakistani sample for the effect of age and educational level. Participants below 30 years-old constituted nearly half of the sample drawn in Pakistan. Many of

young people in Pakistan have been educated in Western universities with modern ideas than the oldest generations.

To investigate the United Arab Emirates (UAE) society's attitudes towards women managers and the effects of patriarchy, age, and sex differences, Mostafa (2005) used the "multidimensional Aversion to Women Who Work Scale" (MAWWWS) to survey a sample of 186 participants, 92 students from the Faculty of Business Administration and 94 participants from the older generations (45-plus). The result shows a generation gap in attitudes towards women managers. The older generation sample had significantly different attitudes towards women managers from UAE students, who held more favourable attitudes towards women managers. These differences between the two generations were attributed to modernity which may moderate, patriarchal attitudes towards women as managers in the Arab world. The study also found significant differences between male and female participants' attitudes towards women's roles and participation in UAE society. Females showed more positive attitudes towards women as managers than males do.

From this brief literature review of Arabic and Islamic countries, it can be seen that there are relationships between gender and generations, on the one hand, and attitudes towards women managers on the other (Guney, Gohar, Akinci, & Akinci, 2006; Mostafa, 2005). Males still present negative attitudes towards women working in leadership positions. In addition of gender factor, the current study will add to the literature by examined the influence of working experience on these negative attitudes towards women managers in an Arabic and Islamic country.

2.6 Women in the Sultanate of Oman

In the Sultanate of Oman, as mentioned earlier, there is also under-representation of women in managerial positions. Literature suggested different reasons for the lack of women managers in the sultanate of Oman. For example, Delays in women's education could be one reason for the lack of equal opportunity between men and women in managerial positions. Al-Lamki's (1999) study was one of the earliest attempts to understand the reasons for the under-representation of women in the managerial positions in the Sultanate of

Oman. This study addressed the role of Omani women in management positions and the obstacles to women's progress. Additionally, the study also reviewed the procedures that should be taken to support women and women's success in the educational, social, and personal fields. Omani female managers working in the public and private sectors were the subjects of this study. They worked in different positions such as directors, director generals, advisors to Ministers, heads of departments, assistant deans, and deans. The researcher used both qualitative and statistical methods to describe and analyse the characteristics of the data collected.

Al-Lamki's (1999) study also indicated that even though women have better qualifications compared with their male colleagues and they have been supported by the government of Oman, they are still facing many obstacles in their path to managerial positions and their participation rates are still very low. This low representation rate of Omani women in managerial positions has been attributed by the participants in this study to traditional values and culture such as the conflict between roles of being a wife and mother, and the role of being a professional woman. The respondents believe that male employers perceive that the primary role of women is as wife and mother, and they have less abilities and less competence to work in leadership positions. Respondents also indicated that the most common issues of concern were cultural attitudes, traditional values and stereotypes of the role of women in Arab-Islamic societies (Al-Lamki, 1999).

Al Khaduri (2007) attributed the low participation of women in high political positions, especially in Oman's Consultative Council (*Majlis Al-Shura*), to, first, "the cultural and traditional mindset of the Omani community that holds back women from moving forward" (p. 6). However, although the developments in perspectives of women have made many changes in other sectors in Omani life, the political participation of women is not much welcomed. Second, during the past 36 years, Omani women have gained a good education, and this has to be seen as a source of strength. However, it has not been employed to empower them in *Majlis Al Shura*. Therefore, the government has made several attempts to increase awareness of the importance of this issue among citizens.

Similarly, Donn and Issan (2007) say that until 1970 there were only three schools in the Sultanate of Oman. These schools accepted only male students, as females were excluded from schooling. The first female school was established when Sultan Qaboos began his rule in 1970. Since then the number of girls enrolled in education has rapidly increased. Since 1970, the new government has encouraged women to play an active role in the development of their society. Therefore, this government has introduced and implemented all kinds of policies for all stages of education and for social welfare. To further advocate women's involvement in the public and personal spheres, the government also instituted several legislations.

In conclusion, despite this early attention to the situation of Omani women since the beginning of the modern state in 1970 when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos began governing, the participation of women in the managerial positions has not met the expectations as set out by the developmental strategy between 1970 and 1995. This period witnessed a low participation rate of women in the workforce in the modern economic sectors. One of the reasons which have led to the low representation of women at this stage is their low educational level and the low level of professionalism of women during this period. Social and cultural factors are further reasons that negatively affected many women's participation in economic, business and modern management.

2.7 Leaders' communication competencies

Communication competence plays an essential role in the success of management and leadership, and influences their followers' attitudes and performance (Penley, Alexander, Jernigan, & Henwood, 1991; Wieck, Prydun, & Walsh, 2002). Hackman and Johnson (2009) demonstrate that leadership effectiveness relies on participation in interaction with others and improving their effective communication skills. Communication style is one factor that contributes to variations in leader effectiveness (Hackman & Johnson, 2000). Vuuren, Jong, and Seydel (2007) have hypothesized that there is a relationship between managerial communication and attitudes about the organisation, and that satisfaction with supervisor communication contributes to employees' effective organisational communication.

In terms of the importance of communication competencies, Wieck, Prydun, and Walsh (2002) articulate that young nurses want their leaders to be motivational, receptive, positive, and good communicators. Maxwell (1999) provides another example of the importance of the relationship between leadership and communication skills. As he argues in his book *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, “communication is the key to good leadership” (p.3). Maxwell also believes that the most powerful weapon leaders can have is communication, so they can transfer complex messages and make it easy for everyone to understand. Leaders have to simplify their messages to suit the level of audience, and they have to give their attention to people who they need to communicate with (Maxwell, 1999). Hackman and Johnson (2009) also asserted that leaders spend most of their time composing messages and sending them to their followers. They focused on the importance of a willingness to interact between leaders and their followers when they stated:

Viewing leadership from a communication perspective recognizes that leadership effectiveness depends on your willingness to interact with others (the willingness to communicate) and on making skilful use of storytelling, emotional communication competencies, and impression management. (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 34)

Communication competencies, which are “frequently used to refer to the level of communication skill that a given communicator possesses” (Penley et al., 1991, p.58), are fundamentally linked with managing an organisation. To study the relationship between communication competencies and managerial performance, Penley et al (1991) identified the communication skills and social cognitive abilities which are usually linked with managerial performance for both male and female managers. They modified and used different scales to measure the communication variables such as oral communication apprehension, written communication apprehension, cognitive differentiation, self-monitoring and communication competency. They also used four scales to measure managerial performance. These questionnaires were mailed to 354 middle and upper level managers of banks in Arizona. The study found that there is a relationship between communication skills and managerial performance, and females generally reported poorer communication skills when

compared with males. Women reported significantly more oral communication apprehension than men; they also reported significantly more difficulty in written communication and in self-monitoring introversion than men (Penley et al, 1991).

Oakley (2000) argues that women's communication style and linguistics are usually misinterpreted or devalued by men. The less aggressive and assertive types of communication associated with women may be particularly unacceptable ways to communicate in the upper echelons of most organisations. Women also are less likely to engage in behaviours that are self-promoting compared with men. This personality, according to Oakley (2000), will work to the disadvantage of women who work in hierarchical systems because this type of work needs negotiating authority. In addition, depending on the managers' skills in negotiating authority and whether or not others support or undercut their effort, they can be promoted up the corporate ladder. In other words, the linguistic style can be used as a key factor in the ability to negotiate authority.

Oakley observes that women less often than men engage in behaviours that get them recognised by those in power and that advances them in the art of managing up. Women are less likely to be recognised because they are less likely to blow their own horn. For example, whereas men managers usually issue an order such as "Have this report on my desk by noon", women managers are more likely to ask questions such as "Can you have this report on my desk by noon?" This is often perceived as a lack of self-confidence or a failure to effectively exercise authority rather than an attempt to be considerate or polite. As a result, in order to be perceived as strong, decisive and in control, women are compelled to change their linguistic style to use a more command-oriented form. However, when women adopt a male linguistic style, they are often perceived as "too aggressive" by their male counterparts.

Oakley also makes a convincing argument that gender stereotypes have many impacts on women managers. First, male managers characterise female managers' style as less self-confident, less analytical, less emotionally stable, and less consistent, and as possessing poorer leadership skills than male managers. Second, stereotypes recording as tone and pitch of voice, physical appearance, and mode of dress are other barriers to advancement women in

leadership positions. In addition, according to Oakley (2000), the norm for the exercise of leadership is considered to be a low pitched or masculine-sounding voice and “it is not uncommon for female political candidates to be coached to lower the pitch of the voice in order to increase their credibility with voters” (p. 326). Dress is another stumbling block for women to advance to leadership positions. If women are dressed in a way that is appropriate to their femininity, it is found that it can influence their credibility as managers, and that can work against women in leadership positions. Physical attractiveness is another factor which can work against women in leadership positions. Finally, perceptions socialise women differently from men managers in the way they deal with moral dilemmas. Oakley argues that men managers usually tend to approach moral issues in terms of justice, rules, and individual rights; in contrast, women consider “moral dilemmas using criteria that judges outcomes based on their impact on relationships” (p. 327).

In terms of men and women communication styles, Claes (1999) pointed out that people take male speech and conversation strategies as the norm, and as a result, they tend to assess female speech in relation to male speech. Female speech has been labelled “less rational and given to display greater sensitivity, to use fewer abstract words, a smaller vocabulary and a simpler structure” (p. 388). Females also tend to use more adjectives, modal verbs, interjections, tag questions. Their language has been defined as polite and insecure, and their conversational styles have been described as cooperative. Male language, in contrast, has been defined as assertive and direct, and their conversational styles as competitive.

Although much research has been conducted on attitudes towards women as managers in many countries (e.g., Greece, Turkish, Hong Kong, Republic of China, Chile, the USA, Pakistan, and the UAE), little systematic research has been undertaken to investigate the relationship between attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of the communication competencies of these managers. In the next section, I present some previous studies that examine the relationship between attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of their communication competence.

2.8 Attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of their communication competence

Communication competencies are basic skills to managers. Despite the fact that they have been considered in many studies, only a few link attitudes towards women managers and perceptions of their communication competence.

Wheeles and Berryman-Fink (1985) investigated the relationship between attitudes towards women, attitudes towards women as managers, and perceptions of their communication competencies. The participants were 98 male and 80 female from different types of organisations, such as hospitals, banks, insurance companies, the auto industry, and federal and city government, in a large Midwestern metropolitan area. The results indicate that males and females have different attitudes towards women as managers. Women respondents reported more positive attitudes towards women in general and towards women as managers in particular than male respondents did. Further, female respondents perceived that women managers have greater communication competence than did male respondents. Participants who had worked with/for women managers presented more positive attitudes towards women as managers than those who did not have such experiences.

Similarly, Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) explored the relationship between interaction with women managers and attitudes towards women as managers by investigating 99 male managers in the main branches of six banks randomly chosen from a standard list of banks. They used the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) (Overall Assessment) to measure participants' overall assessment of women as managers and scales of frequencies and satisfaction to measure the interaction and satisfaction with interaction. The results show there is no significant correlation between the extent of interaction with women managers and attitudes towards women as managers. In contrast, results show significant correlations between satisfaction with interactions between employees and women managers and attitudes towards women as managers (Bhatnagar, & Swamy, 1995).

2.9 The research questions

This previous review of literature illustrated that; first, although many studies have been conducted on attitudes towards women as managers, there is little

research in the Arabic and Muslim countries, particularly in Oman. Second, through my review of the previous studies I found there were only two studies that linked attitudes and competencies of communication. These studies show different results; while the Wheelless and Berryman-Fink (1985) found a relationship between attitudes towards women managers and the communications competencies, the Bhatnagar and Swamy's (1995) study illustrated no significant relationship between interaction and attitudes. Due to this lack of information on attitudes towards women in the Sultanate of Oman and on links between attitudes towards women managers and their communication competence, the current study aimed to investigate the attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of their communication competencies in Oman, as well as to consider the impact of gender and experience of working with women managers on these attitudes and perceptions. Furthermore, almost all studies used only the quantitative method which provides a clear view about perceptions of women managers and their communication competencies. I thought that conducting a study using mixed research method (using quantitative and qualitative methods) will in addition, provide a clear view of perceptions and also a deeper understanding of perceptions and the factors behind help explain the under-representation of women in managerial positions. Therefore, this research investigated the following research questions:

Question 1:

- (a). What are the attitudes of Omani people towards women managers?
- (b). Are there differences according to gender and work experience with women managers on these attitudes towards women managers?

Question 2:

- (a). What are Omani people's perceptions of women managers' communication competence?
- (b). Are there differences according to gender and work experience with women managers' on perceptions of their communication competence?

Question 3: Is there a relationship between attitudes towards women as managers and perceptions of their communication competencies?

2.10 Summary

In this literature review I have examined the under-representation of women in leadership positions by giving some examples of under-representation of women in these positions, such as the United States, Britain, Australia and some Arab and Islamic countries. I have also shown that the literature suggests that although the number of women in leadership has significantly increased during the last few decades, barriers such as gender stereotypes and discrimination towards women managers still exist to impede women from progressing into leadership positions. I have also reviewed literature which studied attitudes towards women managers in general and women managers in the Arabic and Islamic world and the ability of some variables such as sex, experience, communication, and culture to influence attitudes towards women as managers. The next chapter outlines the research design of this study

Chapter Three

Research Design: Methodology and Methods

This chapter turns our attention to the methodology and research design which have been used in this research. It outlines the research design and their relevance to the study. A mixed method, feminist lens was used to approach the issue because this research aims to contribute to an explanation of under-representation of women in leadership positions. It also present the data collection procedures and the research outlines, the research context and the method of sampling that used to select the research participants. This section also explained the two data measurements instruments WAMS, and CCWMS, and the semi-structured interviews which will be used to collect the study data. Finally, this section discussed the ethical considerations which will guide the study, and the research limitations.

3.1 Research Methodology

The way people view and understand the world depends on what they use to observe the world. Anderson and Arsenault (1998) state:

How we see the world is largely a function of where you view it from, what you look at, what lens you use to help you see, what tools you use to clarify your image, what you reflect on and how you report your world to others (p. 3).

The initial step in the research design involved feminist research as the research paradigm that would be most suitable for this study.

3.1.1 Feminist research

One reason for using the feminist research methodology is to provide an explanation of the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the Sultanate of Oman by examining the attitudes towards and perceptions of women managers and their communication competencies. According to Kolmar and Bartkowski (2000) feminist theories try to examine and explain the reasons for and conditions of the domination of men and why men are more powerful,

predictable, and active, and have been associated with greater value and higher status than women. Kolmar and Bartkowski also state: “Feminist theory is a body of writing that attempts to describe, explain, and analyse the conditions of women’s lives” (p. 2). Feminist research aims to end women’s unequal social position through correcting both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience, and those who contribute to this field within a positivist paradigm see their work as creating standards to help to reduce sex-based inequality (Lather, 1988) and the domination of men.

Thus, the empirical work of feminist is multi-paradigmatic. According to Campbell and Wasco (2000) feminist approaches have been created and formed by different political ideologies: liberal, radical, socialist feminism, and womanism. Liberal feminism emphasises advocating equal access to resources in the society by building connections among women. This movement, which influenced many of the key issues that arose in the 1970s, focused on the equality between the sexes, equal pay for equal work, and equal employment opportunities. Socialist feminism was developed based on the belief that multiple forms of oppression have been caused by the problems of the economy and structure of society. This ideology gives more attention to classism rather than focus on racism and sexism. It focuses on the inequalities created by capitalism, while other forms of feminism locate men’s privilege and power over women as centrally problematic. Therefore, it aims to build combinations with other humanist groups which have the same critique of the capitalist system. The third ideology is radical feminism.

This ideology gives attention to gender oppression and calls for restructured social institutions. Radical feminists believe that the systematic marginalisation of women is the fundamental form of inequality, although it acknowledges that classism and racism intersect with sexism. Historically, the oppression of women appeared before the social constructions of classism and racism, and inequalities towards women are widely spread across cultural and economic structures. This radical feminism ideology recognises sexism as the fundamental problem, while socialist feminists believe that capitalism is the primary source of oppression. Womanism is the last feminist ideology. It has been created by black feminists to

examine the intersections of race, gender, and class oppression. The main difference between womanism and other ideologies is that it gives more attention to experiences among women of different classes and racial/ethnic groups (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

At an epistemological level, different feminist perspectives (liberal, radical, socialist, and womanism) have reflected a reinterpretation of epistemological models (positivism, realism, critical theory, and constructivism). Women's lived experiences have been legitimated as sources of knowledge in the feminist social science. To inform our understanding of the social world, and because they are worthy of critical reflections, feminist research focuses on both the ordinary and extraordinary events of women's lives. These examinations of women's experiences must reflect an ethic of respect, collaboration, and caring as the process of feminist research methodology (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Cancian (1992) reviews five elements of feminist methodology, all of which challenge inequality, in some way, between men and women.

The first element is gender and inequality. This methodology assumes that women are subjected to widespread oppression by men and by patriarchal social patterns. This oppression can be changed as it is not natural or inevitable. To decrease this inequality and oppression, these theoretical assumptions involve strong political and moral commitments. The second element of feminist methodology is Experience. Within this element, many feminist projects focus on the personal, everyday experiences of women, especially women on the margins, and men. In addition, feminist standpoint is a unique philosophy of knowledge which challenges people to see and understand the world using the eyes and experiences of oppressed women, and provide the vision and knowledge of oppressed women to social activism and social changes. This feminist stand epistemology requires placing women at the centre of the research process in order to understand what life is like for women today (Brooks, 2007). To understand the broader context of people's actions, and to explore feelings and activities of those who have been ignored and devalued in traditional research, scholars use qualitative methods such as interviews and ethnographies. This element accentuates giving voice to

people's experience using a qualitative technique to support inequality just like quantitative data.

The third element of feminist methodology is Action. This element takes different forms such as policy recommendations which focus on politicians and social movement activists, and efforts to produce some social changes "such as establishing a better women's shelter, or include consciousness-raising groups for participants" (Cancian, 1992, p. 626). Critique of research is another element of feminist methodology. This element has been influenced by postmodernism and it focuses on critiquing conventional categories as a result of legitimate relations of domination. It also attempts to clarify the perspective of the middle-class which has been falsely universalised and privileges about women in general. Finally, participatory methods, which emphasises the relationship between researchers and researched, therefore, it recommends to use of two-way, interactive interviews instead of using the traditional method where all questions are asked by an interviewer (Cancian, 1992).

This emphasis in using qualitative research leads to a debate about which research method can fit feminist values of challenging inequality and empowering women. According to Westmariand (2001) there is a debate between quantitative and qualitative research methods and their relevance to feminist research. Quantitative methods have generally been linked with words such as positivism, scientific, objectivity, statistics, and masculinity. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, has traditionally been linked with interpretivism, non-scientific, subjectivity, and femininity. The quantitative approach, because of these linkages, has been criticised by some feminist researchers. They argue that because qualitative methods provide subjective knowledge and a more equal relationship between the researcher and the researched, it is more appropriate for feminist research. Westmariand argues that the survey method could be the best way to find out the prevalence of problems; however, it does not provide an understanding of these problems. Interviews, in contract, can provide a fully understand of women's experiences and theories. For example, researchers using a qualitative method can find that women working outside the home generally get paid less than men;

however, they cannot explain the feelings of those women and how this situation affects their lives. Campbell and Wasco (2000) concluded:

The overarching goal of feminist research is to identify the ways in which multiple forms of oppression impact women's lives and empower women to tell their stories by providing a respectful and egalitarian research environment. This mission necessitates use of multiple methodologies, and there is broad acceptance of both qualitative and quantitative work in feminist scholarship. (p. 787)

In addition, Beetham and Demetriades (2007) consider that while qualitative data is often based on opinions, statistics appear more concrete and may be advanced by busy mainstream practitioners without due recognition. To measure gender inequality and build a more accurate picture, we need both quantitative and qualitative indicators and methods of feminist research, and we have to ensure that they complete each other (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007).

By using feminist's epistemologies, I based this study on feminist ontologies of gender inequalities to explore perceptions of women managers in the Sultanate of Oman. I aimed to explore the perceptions of Omani people towards women managers in order to contribute to "documenting women's lives, experiences and concerns, illuminating gender-based stereotypes and biases, and unearthing women's subjugated knowledge" (Leckenby, Hesse-Biber, 2007)

3.1.2 Mixed methods approach

The mixed-methods approach aims to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspectives and their participation in life (Firestone, 1987). According to Creswell (2009) mixed methods research, which will be used in this study, combines both qualitative and quantitative forms and is based on philosophical assumptions which are used in quantitative and qualitative approaches. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (p. 17). The overall strength of a study using a mixed methods

approach is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research alone (Creswell, 2009).

A survey method has been widely used as a technique of gathering information from participants in quantitative studies. Thomas (2003) pointed out that “survey methods involve gathering information about the current status of some target variable within a particular collectively, then reporting a summary of the findings” (p. 41). By studying a sample of any population, a survey can provide a description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of that population (Creswell, 2009).

The current research studied in a quantitative way the perceptions of women managers in the Sultanate of Oman and perceptions of their communication competencies using two measures: Women as Managers (WAMS) and Communication Competencies of Women Managers (CCWMS). Then it examined the correlation between these variables. It also studied the differences between males and females in these perceptions. Finally, it examined the influence of gender and work experience of working with women managers on these perceptions.

To examine the perceptions of communication competencies of women managers and attitudes towards women as managers, I conducted interviews with approximately 12 Omani employees from the Ministry of Higher Education and Colleges of Applied Science in the Sultanate of Oman in order to examine their experience of working with women managers and, the relationship between those workers attitudes towards women as managers and their communication competencies.

This type of using of mixed method to know more about a phenomenon when the findings from data generated by two or more methods are brought together is called triangulation (Moran-Ellis, Alexander, Cronin, Dickinson, Fielding, Sloney & Thomas, 2006). According to Moran-Ellis et al, there is a debate of the benefit of using triangulation in social sciences. Some researchers argue that triangulation referred to the claim that comparing results from two or more different research methods in order to conclude whether an aspect of a phenomenon has been accurately measured. Using of this modal of triangulation leads to increased

confidence in the implied measurement outcomes of the research. This is called the “increased validity’ model of triangulation. Other researchers, on the other hand, reject the ‘increased validity’ modal. They argue that the value of triangulation is to generate more knowledge about a phenomenon. Furthermore, they believe that these paradigms which include quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches “rest on apparently incompatible assumptions about how we understand and theorise notions of reality, and so cannot be combined to produce increasingly accurate approximations to the ‘truth’ of a phenomenon” (Moran-Ellis et al, 2006, p.48).

Creswell (2009) pointed out several reasons of using mixed methods. First, mixed method appeared in 1959 when Campbell and Fisk used multi-methods in order to examine validity of psychological traits. Second, researchers recognised that all methods have limitations, they felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralise the biases of other methods. This led to the emergence of the triangulation, which means the researcher seeks convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods. Third, the findings from one method can help to identify participants to study or questions to ask for the other method. Finally, in order to reinforce each other, the qualitative and quantitative data can be merged into one large database or the results used side by side, for example, statistical results can be supported by qualitative quotes.

Creswell (2009) also identified three general strategies of using mixed method. The first method is sequential mixed methods. In this method researchers aimed to elaborate on or expand on the results of one method with another method. For example, researcher can begin with a quantitative method to test a theory, followed by a qualitative method to provide a detailed exploration with a few cases or individuals. The second method is concurrent mixed methods. In this design, researchers link between quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. They collect both forms of data at the same time then combine the information in the interpretation of the overall results. Researchers also can use this design in order to analyse different types of questions by embedding one smaller form of data within another larger data collection. Transformative mixed method is the third strategy of using quantitative

and qualitative methods. Researchers in this design contain both quantitative and qualitative data by using a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective. “This lens provides a framework for the topic of interest, methods for collecting data, and outcomes or changes anticipated by the study” (Creswell, 2009, p.15).

The current research used triangulation model to generate more knowledge about perceptions of Omani women as managers and perceptions about their communication competencies in order to gain in-depth understanding about these perceptions. This type of using of mixed methods described by Leckenby and Hesse-Biber (2007) as using qualitative study to identify specific populations or issues that require to be further explored in depth, and the qualitative study complements the quantitative. In this study, first, I collected the quantitative data by using questionnaires in order to generate information about attitudes of Omani people towards women as managers and perceptions of their communication competences. Then I conducted a number of interviews. These interviews explained the reasons of under-representation of women in leadership positions in Oman, although quantitative results showed positive attitudes towards women managers. Interviews also added different views of Omani women managers and their communication competences than those found in quantitative results. Qualitative findings also explained these positive attitudes and assisted to understand the situation and the environment which surround Omani women managers which made some differences between this research findings compared with other research.

3.1.2.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research, according to Creswell (2009), is defined as “a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures” (p. 4). Quantitative research is based on a positivist philosophy (Creswell, 2009; Firestone, 1987; Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie 2004). This philosophy presumes that “there are social facts with an objective reality apart from the beliefs of individuals” (Firestone, 1987, p. 16). The purists of this approach believe that social observations should be treated in the same way that physical scientists treat physical phenomena (Johnson, &

Onwuegbuzie, 2004), and the main purpose of quantitative research is looking for an explanation of causes of changes in social facts by using objective measurements and quantitative analysis (Firestone, 1987).

The study used the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) to collect data about attitudes towards women as managers in Oman. The scale has been used in a broad range of studies, with different samples. For example, Owen and Todor (1993) employed it with a sample of human resource managers, Ware and Cooper-Studebaker (1989) used it with MBA and undergraduate students, Murgai (1991) used WAMS to examine library and information science master's degree candidates male and female managers, and Cordano, Scherer, and Owen (2002) used the scale with 412 Chilean and American undergraduate business administration students. WAMS has also been used in part in studies conducted in Arabic and Islamic countries. Sidani and Gardner (2000), for example, used five items from the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) to study the positive attitudes towards women's involvement at work as a work value among Lebanese workers (Sidani, & Gardner, 2000). Whiteoak, Crawford, and Mapstone (2006) also used four items from the Women as Managers Scale to study the attitudes towards women at work in the United Arab Emirates.

3.1.2.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, in contrast, is “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p.4). Qualitative approaches, which are also called constructivist and interpretive, are based on a phenomenological paradigm which assumes that reality is socially constructed through an individual or collective definition of the situation (Firestone, 1987). The purists of this approach argue for the superiority of constructivism, idealism, relativism, humanism, hermeneutics, and postmodernism, while they reject positivist philosophy (Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). These interviews provided the participants with opportunities to talk about their experiences and facts such as, the experience of working with women managers, their studying or working overseas and how these factors influenced their attitudes and perceptions of women as managers and their communication competencies.

3.2 Research methods

In this section I described the instruments used in data collection. I reviewed how I translated and prepared the research questionnaires and interview. I also describe the reliability and the validity of both instruments.

3.2.1 Research Questionnaire Survey

In the current study, I used two different scales. The first scale was Women as Managers (WAMS) to measure the perceptions of women managers. This scale consists of 21 likert items explaining the general acceptance of women as managers and reflecting different stereotypes of women holding managerial positions (see appendix 1). Each item is accompanied by seven response options ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 7 “strongly agree”. Higher scale scores reflect more positive attitudes towards women as managers. The scale’s items represent three factors: general acceptance of female as managers, feminine barriers to full-time permanent employment, and personality traits usually ascribed to managers (Beere, 1990). Support for the instrument’s validity is presented by Peters et al. (1974), Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, and Smith (1977), and Ilgen and Moore (1983) who verified the scale’s reliability. According to Peters, Ilgen, and Smith (1977), the split-half shows that, the reliability of the scale was .91, which reflects the high level of reliability of the scale.

The second scale was Communication of Competencies of Women Managers Scale (CCWMS) (Berryman-Fink, 1982), (see appendix 2). I used this scale in order to measure the perceived communication competencies of women managers measured. This scale was developed to measure communication skills of women which include interpersonal competency skills of listening, verbal ability, empathy, receptiveness, nonverbal communication, and flexibility. It also includes items about communication training needs of women managers such as assertiveness, public speaking, credibility, professionalism, and emotional control (Wheeler, & Berryman-Fink, 1985). The scale includes 30 items, 16 of which are positive statements about women managers and 14 items of which are negative statements (Beere, 1990). According to Beere (1990) the internal consistency of

CCWMS was .90 based on the despondences from 178 persons employed in a variety of organisations.

Because both of these WAMS and CCWMS tests were written in English, they were translated into Arabic language to avoid any misunderstanding of any of the tests items (see appendices 3 and 4). To achieve maximum accuracy in the translation, the researcher asked Arabic-speaking academics to back translate the instruments into English language to verify the accuracy of the translation. The Arabic version of the scales was then piloted with a group of 15 Omani males and females in Hamilton to ensure that questions were clear, easy to follow, and understandable. After the arrival of the researcher to the Sultanate of Oman, the translated version of the questionnaires was reviewed by a group of academics working in the higher education sector. In order to calculate the reliability coefficient of the instruments the proposed amendments of the scales were applied to a convenience sample of 30 male and female Omani employees working in the Ministry of Higher Education.

The stability of the scales tool was used to find its ability to give similar results if this tool was applied to another sample under the same circumstances and conditions. Stability is a necessary feature for the quality of the tool used. Using SPSS and Coefficient (Cronbach's) alpha, both scales had an acceptable coefficient alpha. The Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) had a coefficient alpha ($\alpha = 0.82$), while, the Communication of Competencies of Women Managers Scale (CCWMS) had a coefficient alpha ($\alpha = 0.76$). Both of these questionnaires take approximately between 25-30 minutes to complete.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

In present study, I also interviewed 12 employees (6 males and 6 females) in the Ministry of Higher Education. Kvale (1983) states that the purpose of the qualitative research interview is "to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 174). These interviews aim to elicit descriptive and in-depth data from participants, who will be responding to questions posed by the interviewer. The aim of this interview is to obtain a deeper understanding of attitudes towards

women as managers and the role of communication competencies in shaping these attitudes, which will complement the results of the tests. Through these interviews, the researcher wants to venture deeper into participants' experience to investigate their attitudes are towards women as managers and look at whether the perceptions of communication competencies influence these attitudes. The interviews took between 40 and 60 minutes for each participant and they were recorded by the interviewer and transcribed later.

According to Opdenakker (2006) face-to-face interviews have many advantages. First, only face-to-face interviews provide the synchronous communication in time and place, which gives the face-to-face interview the advantage of social cues, such as voice, intonation, body language, and so on. These social cues can add much extra information and explanation to the verbal answers in the interviews. Second, there is often only short time between questions and answers in face-to-face interviews, which gives the opportunity of immediate reactions for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Third, face-to-face can be recorded; this advantage assists the interviewer to write his report with more accuracy than just taking notes. Finally, termination in the face-to-face is easier compared with other types of interviews such as computer-mediated and telephone. The interviewer only needs to shuffle the papers and turn off the recorder to give enough sign that the end of the interview is near (Opdenakker, 2006).

The interview protocol was derived from the research questions and literature (see appendix 3). After the completion of the draft, and reviewing the interview questions were translated into Arabic language. Then it was piloted on 3 of specialists in the field of translation. Finally, the revised interview protocol was reviewed by 10 academics in the field of Arabic language to make sure of wording, and grammatical mistakes (see appendix 4).

3.2.3 Data Collection Procedure

In this section, the procedures used to collect the data within the research settings will be discussed. The research process is described including the selecting of samples and using of questionnaires and interview tools.

3.2.3.1 The Survey Sample Characteristics

The survey sample included 100 males and 108 females out of the total number of the respondents of 208. The sample included 44 per cent aged between 20-29 years, 44 per cent between 30-39 years, 10% per cent between 40-49 years and one person whose age was 50 years or more. Eighteen per cent of the research sample were working as managers and 82 per cent were working as employees. The individuals sample also included three levels of education. The pre-university level made up 16.3 per cent of the sample.

The University level included most of the sample at 69.7 per cent. Finally, post-graduate level (higher studies) included 13.9 per cent of the total size of the sample). A grater of the sample had not been overseas to study or work these account for 74.5 per cent, while, 25.5 per cent had been outside the country. Finally, almost two thirds of the research sample had waked with or for women managers.

The table bellow illustrates the demographic details about the quantitative research sample.

Table 2. The Survey Sample

Variables		Total	Males	Females
		208	100	108
Age	20-29	93	38	55
	30-39	93	48	45
	40-49	21	13	8
	50-above	1	1	-
Work positions	Managerial position	38	25	13
	Non-managerial positions	170	75	95
level of educational qualification	Pre-university	34	23	11
	Graduate	145	60	85
	Post-graduate	29	17	12
Experience of studying or working overseas	Yes	53	33	20
	No	155	67	88
Experience of working with or for women managers	Yes	137	47	86
	No	71	53	22

3.2.3.2 Procedures of conducting the survey

To conduct research permission must be sought from the Ministry of Higher Education and the Department of Postgraduate studies. After obtaining the permission from the Department of Graduate Studies, the data collection of quantitative part was started. Heads of Departments in the Ministry were handed over a number of questionnaires to be distributed to employees in each department and then received and delivered to the researcher at a later time. Participants in the questionnaire section of this study were 208 employees (100 males, 108 females). They consist of a convenience sample from different departments in the Ministry of Higher Education and Colleges of Applied Science in the Sultanate of Oman where many women work in managerial and leadership positions. These departments have been selected based on their managers in order to obtain participants from both genders. The researcher mixed his selection from departments which were headed by women and others which were headed by men in order to study the influence of experience in attitudes towards women managers. Most questionnaires were delivered through the department heads after face-to-face interviews. I first introduced myself and the aim of the study. Then the procedure distribution of questionnaires and a date of receipt were discussed. This period ranged between one to two weeks. The questionnaires were collected and stored in a safe place until the beginning of the process of statistical analysis.

3.2.3.3 Procedures of conducting the interviews

All participants currently work at the Ministry of Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman. They were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a good representation of the community of the study from the different departments within the Ministry. They were 6 males and 6 females aged between 25-40 years old. Five of them had bachelor's degree, while three had a master's degree and three had PhDs. One did not mention of the level of education. Eight participants had an experience of working with women, while the other four have no experience. The table in appendix 4 provides an overview of the interview participants' profiles.

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. All the interviews were conducted where it was convenient and accessible for the participants, commonly, in their offices but sometimes in the meeting rooms in the departments. All interviews were face-to-face interview lasted approximately between 40 minutes, to one hour. All interview questions (see Appendix 4) were derived from my core research questions. All these questions were translated to Arabic language to make sure that they were clear to participants. After translation to Arabic the interview protocol were reviewed by five professors in Arabic and management.

An information sheet was given to prospective participants interested in taking part in the study. The information sheet contained an overview and the purpose of the study, what they have to do, and their rights to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from participation in the search at any time before starting to write the final results of the study. The participants were asked to sign the consent form. All the interviews were conducted in an atmosphere of calm and most the interviews questions were answered. Only a few participants refused to respond to a limited number of interview questions. All interviews were tape-recorded, with interviewees' permission.

3.2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

To examine the first and the second study questions the researcher employed percentages and frequencies in order to explore the attitudes towards women managers in Oman and perceptions of their communication competences. To answer the first and second questions in order to test the differences in the resulting factors according to participants gender and experience of working with women managers across both variables (attitudes and perceptions of communication competencies) Chi-Square test utilized. Finally, the researcher also calculated the correlation coefficient to explore the relationships between attitudes towards women as managers (WAMS) and their communication competencies in order to examine the third question.

The interview data were analysed using the thematic analysis approach. This approach has been defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 802).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) this method of analysis includes six basic steps which are, first, transcribe the interview data and reading the data until become familiar with it. Second, note the interesting features of the data by coding it in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, and gathering data related to each code. Third, gather codes into potential themes, and collecting all data related to each potential theme. Fourth, review the themes by checking links between the themes and the coded extracts, and creating a thematic map of the analysis. Finally, select a clear definition for each theme.

3.2.5 Ethical Issues

As this research involved engaging with people, the research involved four parties: the researcher, the respondent, and the University of Waikato and the Ministry of Higher Education and Colleges of Applied Science in the Sultanate of Oman. This researcher respects the rights of the other two parties. These include the participant's rights to privacy and the right to be informed of all aspects of the research. Respondents also have been informed about the nature and aims of the study. Each participant was asked to sign the "consent form". All names and personal details of the participants and their departments have been kept confidential. The research met the requirements of the Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato.

Chapter Four

The Results

In this chapter the results of the study are presented. These results were gathered from both the questionnaire survey and the in-depth interviews. In the first section of the chapter, statistics were extracted for the analysis of questionnaires using the SPSS program for the analysis of information collected for the study. In the second section, in order to elicit the recurring themes that appeared related to perceptions of women managers in Oman and their communication competences, the interview data were analyzed using a process of thematic analysis.

In the first section of the analysis, a review of the questions in the questionnaire is distributed to show the details of respondents. It starts with the following:

4.1 Results from the Survey

Respondents were asked about how satisfied they are of working with women managers.

Table 3. The degree of satisfaction from working with women managers

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	9	6.6	6.6
2	11	8.0	14.6
3	45	32.8	47.4
4	30	21.9	69.3
5	42	30.7	100.0
Total	137	100.0	

The question on satisfaction of the experience of working with women managers was asked across five degrees. From the above table, it is clear that most participants were satisfied with their experience working with women managers.

Further, when comparing who have the highest average of satisfaction on working with women managers was given by males or females. The males' rate of scoring was 3.42, while, for females the arithmetic mean of the rate placed as score estimates of the women as managers' scores was 3.64. It is noted that the rate of satisfaction among males and females was approximately equal, noting that the rate of females was slightly higher than that of the males in this item, as almost half of the males did not answer this item of the study.

The results also show that there was a significant negative relationship between satisfaction of the experience of working with women managers and the attitudes towards them $r = -.21, p (.002) < .05$. This result indicates the existence of an inverse relationship between the two variables. The research findings also indicated that there was no significant correlation between the attitudes and having been overseas $r = -.002, p (.973) > .05$

Before reviewing the results, it should be noted that items 1, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 of WAMS present negative attitudes towards women managers; therefore, they took a different gradual values than positive items. For example, response "strongly disagree" in negative items took value 7, "disagree" got 6 and so on. The same technique has been pursued with items 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, and 28 in WMCCS scale.

4.1.1 The attitudes toward women managers

The first research question was: what are the attitudes of the Omani people towards women as managers, and are there differences according to gender and work experience with these attitudes towards women as managers?

In the final result of WAMS, it was found that Omani people have a positive attitude towards women managers ($M= 4.65, SD= 1.55$); that is, most of them look positively on, and encourage women to hold managerial positions, as

indicated by the percentages of acceptance (positive responds). The percentage of the positive attitudes of the people towards women managers was 59 % (15.4%, 22.6%, and 21.5%), whereas the percentage of the negative attitudes of the Omani people towards women measure was 33 % (10.1%, 13.1%, and 10.6%) regardless of the level of acceptance or non-acceptance; and the percentage of neutrality was 6.7%, as indicated by the following table:

Table 4. Percentages of acceptance (approval) of attitudes

		Responses	
		N	Percent
WAMS	Strongly Disagree	442	10.1%
	Disagree	571	13.1%
	Slightly Disagree	464	10.6%
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	291	6.7%
	Slightly Agree	672	15.4%
	Agree	989	22.6%
	Strongly Agree	939	21.5%
Total		4368	100.0%

As for genders, opinions or attitudes of the people of Oman towards women managers from the point of view of males was positive and the percentage was 59.9% depending on the level of the manager (18.9% 22.1% 18.9%).

The negative percentage of males' participants was 32.1%. The percentage of neutral views of males towards women as managers was 8%. The following table illustrates this.

As for females, the general view or the general attitudes towards women as managers were also positive with the percentage of 59.2% for women as managers; whereas the percentage of the negative attitudes was 35.4%. The percentage of neutral views was 5.5%. The following table shows these percentages with the total measures of attitudes:

Table 5. The percentages of males' and females acceptance (approval) on WAMS

		Males percentages		Females percentages	
		N	Percent	N	Percent
WAMS	Strongly Disagree	183	259	259	11.4%
	Disagree	250	321	321	14.2%
	Slightly Disagree	242	222	222	9.8%
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	167	124	124	5.5%
	Slightly Agree	396	276	276	12.2%
	Agree	465	524	524	23.1%
	Strongly Agree	397	542	542	23.9%
Total		2100	100.0%	2268	100.0%

Table (6) presented the means for males and females on items of WAMS. As the responses were made a scale of 1 to 7, value 1 being “strongly disagree” while value 7 being “strongly agree”, the value 4 represent the middle point, or neutral “neither agree nor disagree”. It is noted that for the male sample (n=100) 14 of these 21 items were positive. “Positive” items are those whose mean value is higher than 4, which is the neutral value. However, the responses to the remaining

items are negative as the value of their mean is lower than four. It is possible to consider item 21 could be considered as neutral because its mean is equal to 3.66, which is closer to the value of 4.

The following table in pages 57, 58, 59 reflects the items and the values of their means:

Table 6. Means and standard deviation of males and females participants on WAMS

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
1.	It is less desirable for women than men to have a job that requires responsibility.	4.07	2.100	3.94	2.161	4.20	2.035
2.	Women have the objectivity required to evaluate business situations properly.	4.83	1.582	5.07	1.527	4.56	1.604
3.	Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.	4.23	2.098	3.60	2.060	4.91	1.928
4.	Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programs	5.83	1.585	6.12	1.432	5.51	1.685
5.	Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers.	5.82	1.385	6.08	1.354	5.53	1.367
6.	On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organisation's overall goals than are men.	3.55	1.938	3.08	1.934	4.06	1.819
7.	It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	3.45	1.933	3.36	2.007	3.55	1.855
8.	The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.	5.62	1.426	5.82	1.352	5.40	1.477
9.	Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.	6.19	1.196	6.44	1.026	5.93	1.312

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
10.	It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.	4.85	1.845	5.19	1.686	4.49	1.946
11.	The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.	4.86	1.865	5.09	1.931	4.60	1.764
12.	Women would no more allow their emotions to influence their managerial behaviour than would men.	3.74	1.922	4.06	1.928	3.39	1.863
13.	Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as managers.	5.37	1.666	5.90	1.267	4.79	1.849
14.	To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity.	5.88	1.544	6.02	1.535	5.74	1.548
15.	On the average, a woman who stays at home all the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half time.	5.00	2.113	4.36	2.215	5.69	1.762
16.	Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.	4.74	1.942	4.55	1.876	4.94	1.999
17.	Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world.	2.73	1.811	2.40	1.674	3.09	1.891
18.	Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	3.15	1.809	2.86	1.780	3.47	1.795

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
19.	Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.	5.61	1.454	5.98	1.230	5.20	1.570
20.	Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.	3.44	1.851	3.33	1.855	3.55	1.850
21.	Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.	3.25	1.786	2.86	1.721	3.66	1.771

As for the females which number 108 out of the total size of the sample (n= 208); it was found that there are 12 positive items. Further, the rate of approval for some of the items was very high (fully agree) with a mean higher than 6.

It was noted that the most positive item is the ninth item “Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers”. The means are 6.44 and 5.93 for females and males respectively. This shows that most of the female and males respondent agreed with this. On the other hand, the most negative item was item 17 “Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world” with both genders. The mean was 2.40 and 3.09 for females and males respectively. These means were the majority of both genders disagreed with this statement.

Additionally, it can be considered that the majority of the responses made on item 12 (Women would no more allow their emotions to influence their managerial behaviour than would men) were neutral, on the mean was 4.06. Both males and females also agreed that women do not have to sacrifice of their femininity to successes in leadership positions. They also believe that women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers. In contract, the most significant differences between two genders were in items 13 and 15. Females respondents supported item 13 by 5.90, which reflect a positive attitude towards women as managers; while males disagreed with it they scored only 4.79. Item 15 reflected another differences between males and females while males made 5.69, females, on contrast, scored only 4.36. This means that males believe “women who stay at home all time with her children is a better mother than women who works outside the home at least half time”.

The first research question also asked whether the gender factor and work experience had an impact on the attitude of the people towards women as managers and their impressions concerning this issue through measures that have been developed to test it. The Pearson test of significant shows that gender factor did not affect attitudes toward women managers ($\chi^2 = 18.634, df = 12, p > .05$). In general, it is concluded that the gender factor has no impact on the Omani people in relation to the assessment of the trends towards women as managers.

The research also sought to find on whether the years of work experience among the subjects of the sample had any influence on attitudes toward women managers. This work experience was ranged between zero value- without experience - and the value 17 years of work with women as managers. The following result was obtained:

The Kruskal Wallis test indicated that there is no significant influence of the experience of working with women managers ($\chi^2 = 13.186, df = 15, p > .05$)

4.1.2 Omani women communication competencies

The second research question aimed to find out what perceptions are held towards efficient communication among women as managers in general (WMCCS). At the beginning, the direction of responses of the sample has been clarified.

The prevailing perceptions among the participants towards the communication competencies of women managers were generally positive ($M = 4.99, SD = 1.20$); because the percentage of agreement on (WMCCS) at all levels of responses was 53.8%, while the disagreement percentage was 37.5%, without taking gender as a factor.

Table 7. Percentage of participants of acceptance (approval) on (WMCCS)

		Responses	
		N	Percent
WMCCS	Strongly Disagree	608	9.7%
	Disagree	949	15.2%
	Slightly Disagree	785	12.6%
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	540	8.7%
	Slightly Agree	1082	17.3%
	Agree	1484	23.8%
	Strongly Agree	792	12.7%
Total		6240	100.0%

As for the males and females separately, the general attitudes or public perceptions about the communication competencies among women managers was positive in general for both genders. The percentage of acceptance (approval) of males' participants' was 53.1% on WMCCS, while the percentage of acceptance among females was 54.6%. However, the percentages of negative views (disapproval) were less than positive views (approval); as the percentage of negative views among males being 39.1% and females 35.9 %. It can be noted that the positive values of both genders were convergent.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant influence of gender on precipitance of the communication competencies of women managers. The following tables show the percentages of the respondents of both males and females:

Table 8. Percentages of males and females on WMCCS

	Males percentages		Females percentages	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Strongly Disagree	371	11.5%	237	7.9%
Disagree	519	16.0%	430	14.3%
Slightly Disagree	375	11.6%	410	13.7%
Neither Disagree nor Agree	255	7.9%	285	9.59%
Slightly Agree	495	15.3%	587	19.6%
Agree	767	23.7%	717	23.9%
Strongly Agree	458	14.1%	334	11.1%
Total	3240	100.0%	3000	100.0%

In the following table, it is clear that most of the 30 items have positive responses. This means that the majority of the responses agreed to most items. The table also illustrates the negative items (disagreed) for the male responses. Thus, it can be concluded that participants held positive perceptions of women managers' communication competences

It can be noted that there are seventeen positive items. That means their mean is higher than 4, which is the neutral value in encoding the responses. As for the females, the results found are illustrated in the following table (see table 9).

The two genders agreed on the positive aspect (approving) or negative (disagreement) in all of the items of the study except for Item 19 (Women managers generally have difficulty putting others at ease.), where the majority of responses made by females agreed to this, whereas the males did not agree.

Item 29 "Women managers generally are professional in attitude and appearance" showed that female respondents neither disagree nor agree, while the males agreed. Further, with Item 30 (Women managers generally have no difficulty controlling their emotions.), both females and males did agree.

Table 9 Means and standard deviation of males and females participants on WMCCS

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
1.	Women managers generally are good listeners.	5.52	1.424	5.56	1.429	5.48	1.425
2.	Women managers generally have adequate writing skills.	5.77	1.197	5.85	1.134	5.69	1.261
3.	Women managers generally lack verbal communication skills.	3.13	1.723	2.67	1.498	3.64	1.812
4.	Women managers generally lack nonverbal communication skills.	3.20	1.679	2.91	1.627	3.52	1.685
5.	Women managers generally have pleasing voice qualities.	5.28	1.485	5.61	1.352	4.93	1.546
6.	Women managers generally are skilled in showing empathy/sympathy to others.	5.79	1.169	5.93	1.182	5.64	1.142

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
7.	Women managers generally have difficulty keeping listeners' attention.	3.38	1.534	3.32	1.57	3.45	1.5
8.	Women managers generally have difficulty giving feedback to others.	3.39	1.671	3.13	1.601	3.68	1.70
9.	Women managers generally are skilled in showing concern and understanding for others.	5.55	1.350	5.64	1.336	5.45	1.366
10.	Women managers generally are capable of receiving feedback from others.	4.97	1.552	4.87	1.664	5.07	1.423
11.	Women managers generally are disorganized.	2.23	1.348	2.00	1.26	2.47	1.403
12.	Women managers generally have difficulty relating to others.	2.75	1.570	2.39	1.433	3.15	1.623

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
13.	Women managers generally are open and receptive to others.	5.36	1.431	5.45	1.443	5.26	1.419
14.	Women managers generally possess sensitivity.	5.12	1.465	4.99	1.538	5.26	1.375
15.	Women managers generally lack sincerity.	2.16	1.541	2.00	1.485	2.33	1.589
16.	Women managers generally lack honesty.	1.91	1.413	1.69	1.33	2.15	1.466
17.	Women managers generally are flexible.	4.65	1.658	4.54	1.737	4.78	1.567
18.	Women managers generally treat others as equals.	4.39	1.741	4.49	1.785	4.28	1.694

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
19.	Women managers generally have difficulty putting others at ease.	3.90	1.634	4.01	1.716	3.78	1.541
20.	Women managers generally have difficulty being personable or friendly.	3.08	1.500	3.02	1.535	3.15	1.466
21.	Women managers generally have adequate assertiveness skills.	5.11	1.497	5.45	1.377	4.73	1.536
22.	Women managers generally have enough confidence in themselves.	5.37	1.405	5.69	1.249	5.02	1.484
23.	Women managers generally have difficulty making public speeches or presentations.	3.40	1.642	3.20	1.593	3.62	1.674
24.	Women managers generally have difficulty dealing with males.	3.08	1.604	2.91	1.556	3.26	1.643

No.	Items	Overall sample		Females		Males	
		Means	Sd	Means	Sd	Means	Sd
25.	Women managers possess adequate credibility.	5.13	1.501	5.35	1.41	4.90	1.567
26.	Women managers generally are able to command enough authority.	5.46	1.400	5.72	1.352	5.17	1.4
27.	Women managers generally have attitudes of superiority.	6.02	1.155	6.13	1.128	5.90	1.176
28.	Women managers generally have talk too much.	5.12	1.624	5.15	1.617	5.09	1.64
29.	Women managers generally are professional in attitude and appearance.	4.53	1.923	3.97	1.916	5.13	1.75
30.	Women managers generally have no difficulty controlling their emotions.	4.46	1.804	4.47	1.726	4.44	1.893

When measuring whether the gender factor had any effect on measuring the prevailing perceptions towards the women communication competencies among women as managers in general from the viewpoint of the Omani people based on thirty items designed to measure just that, it was found that the gender factor has no impact in terms of these concepts as follows:

Table 10. Gender effects on perceptions of communication competence

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.127	11	.925
Likelihood Ratio	5.254	11	.918
Linear-by-Linear Association	.123	1	.726
N of Valid Cases	208		

From the previous table, it can be seen that the gender factor do not affect the perceptions of women communication competence since p.Value (.925) >.05.

As to the second part of the second question, which is related to the experience variable and its impact on the scale of the prevailing perceptions towards WMCCS in general among the Omani people, the Chi-Square test was used as in the first part; where it was found that the experience factor and multiple years in working with a woman as manager have effect on perceptions of women managers communication competences. This is shown by the outcome of the Kruskal Wallis test, as all the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) was less than 0.05.

Table 11. Impact of experience on perceptions of communication competencies

	mean2
Chi-Square	.024
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.877

4.1.3 Relationship between attitudes and perceptions

In order to answer the third research question and to understand more about the attitudes towards women managers, a further analysis was made to identify correlations between attitudes towards Omani women managers and perceptions of their communication competences.

By using a Spearman coefficient, it was found that there was a significant relationship between the attitudes of the Omani people towards women as managers and the scale of the prevailing perceptions of communication among women as managers in general.

From another perspective, in order to find if there are any links between the attitudes towards women managers and the perceptions of their communication competencies the correlation coefficient (WAMS) and (WMCCS) was calculated. The findings illustrated that there is a direct correlation between the two variables, $r = .46$, $p < .05$ (2-tailed). However, it is rather a weak correlation as it reaches 0.465. The table below shows the matrix of the link.

Table 12. Correlations between WAMS and WMCCS

			attitudes	competencies
Spearman's rho	attitudes	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.465(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	208	208
	competencies	Correlation Coefficient	.465(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	208	208

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Results from the interviews

Information was gathered from interviews based on questions from an interview schedule (see appendix 3), in order to reach a good understanding of the quantitative results and to provide explanations for the under-representation of women in managerial and leadership positions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Furthermore, findings from the interviews data supported these from survey data.

To extract the recurring themes that appeared relating to perception of women managers and their communication competencies, the data were analysed through the process of thematic analysis. I followed in interviews analysis the process of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which mentioned in chapter four. First, I transcribed the data into Arabic language, which took me quite a while to transcribe them and then to carry out the second task of translated them into English. After that I took time to read the interviews several times in order to understand their meanings. Then I divided each page into three sections, in the first section was for the interviews, the second section was for coding, and the third section was for themes and subthemes. My next step was coding, I read through the data and I gave my full attention to each data item, and identified the most interesting aspects. After that I began to review these codes and classified them into themes to which it belongs, showing a number of topics concerning Omani women managers.

The recurring themes were, first, women as managers in the Sultanate of Oman; second, managers' communication competences; and third, the future of women managers in the Sultanate of Oman.

4.2.1 The first theme: Women as managers in the Sultanate of Oman

In the first theme, participants mentioned a number of topics concerning women Omani managers. First, they discussed a number of reasons and factors that lead to under-representation of women in managerial positions compared to men. The following section discusses the most important topics related to Omani women managers as they appeared through the interviews.

4.2.1.1 Factors of under-representation of women in managerial positions

Through the perceptions of the participants in the study there were several factors limiting the representation of women in managerial and leadership positions. These factors can be categorised as follows: educational and managerial factors, psychological factors, family and social factors, and finally religious factors.

4.2.1.1.1 Educational and managerial factors

Most of the interviewees in the study attributed the low representation of women in managerial positions to educational and administrative factors. Some participants believed that the delayed achievement of women in education was the main reason for the under-representation of women in managerial positions. They thought that until 1970 most of the parents preferred their daughters to participate in work in the home and to care for their young brothers and sisters, or to marry at an early age, and these things were more important than going to school.

According to the participants, this situation led to a number of outcomes. First, it led to a significant increase in the number of men who obtained certificates, thus, increasing their number in managerial positions compared with women. The second consequence of the delay in women's education in the Sultanate is there is a lack of women with managerial experience compared with men, due to the early emergence of men in leadership positions. This is explained by Interviewee 5:

There are several reasons, the most important reason is the small number of educated women who have academic certificates, and this is the main reason; because women began entering schools after 1970... I still think that the beginning of women in education and delay in their entry in the workplace compared to men is the most important reason. We all know that until recently it was inappropriate for women to work and in the early seventies the parents preferred to see their daughters married rather than sending them to school to receive formal education. Also the fact was that society was masculine and because most families were dependent on the male to work and earn a living, the female role was to help mothers in the work of the house washing dishes and clothes, raising her young brothers until she moves to her husband's house where she has to care for her own home and family.

Some participants believed that managerial factors also constitute an obstacle in the path of good representation of women in leadership positions. They thought that some officials still prefer to choose men for such positions, for several reasons, including that, men, in their conception, are more able to sacrifice their time for work. The male personality, is more suitable for such positions than women, they have the speed and efficiency to make decisions. In addition, there is a link in the minds of some officials between men and leadership positions

leading to a preference for men influencing their choice. As Interviewee 5 explained:

Some decision-makers still prefer men in such jobs because of their ability to sacrifice their time and effort at the expense of their families, which is where women often bear most of their burden. Thus those responsible tend to recruit men in such situations. Some also believe that management needs to exhibit resoluteness, and speed of decision, and people need to be able to withstand the pressures without emotion at work. So many officials are still looking for a man for such positions.

In addition, they believe that there are reasons connected with the nature of managerial positions. They observe that these positions are sensitive and important. The person who works in such positions must have the ability and special qualities commensurate with the importance of these positions, and be able to separate between the work requirements and his emotions. This person must also have enough nerve to take important decisions and rapid action.

Participants also indicate that there are management factors related to women themselves. They think that women tend to avoid working in such positions, firstly, for the large amount of work and responsibilities contained in such positions. Secondly, because these positions include more mixing between men and women, they are not acceptable in the society and religion. The third reason, in their view is the lack of managerial expertise women, due to the delay in the education of women in Omani society, as mentioned above. As a result, men were believed to be superior to women in management experience, making them the favourite of some officials. Additionally, the number of men in the workforce is greater than the number of women, making the chances of representation of men in these positions more likely than opportunities for the representation of women. As Interviewee 7 said:

There are factors, in addition to psychological and physiological factors, which impede women from leadership positions. The leadership positions need a strong character and also physical health, and women also think these positions include many responsibilities, and fit men. They think that such positions will make it necessary to work over-time, and sometimes during

vacations at any time, and of course to women, especially in Oman, these things can be a barrier to working for long periods away from home.

4.2.1.1.2 Psychological factors

Some participants, most of them male, also refer to the presence of psychological factors affecting women at certain periods. These factors could limit the work of women in managerial positions. These psychological conditions are those experienced by women as they pass through the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and childbirth. The participants emphasised that the psychological conditions of women during these periods affect their work as a manager. For example, these conditions affect the ability of women to make decisions at work, and women, in this period, are also more vulnerable to their emotions. As some pointed out, women's "fear of failure" in these positions, as a result of the large number of responsibilities, makes women avoid them. As Interviewee 2 explained some difficulties, he said:

Like other communities, in these cases, women have been affected mentally and emotionally as a result of these periods, for example, pregnancy and childbirth, or some social problems such as domination of husbands or brothers male or parent, domination in some communities, and domination tribal elders in some tribal communities.

In contrast, three participants, two of whom are females, think that these cases do not significantly affect women's work. They also believe that these conditions do not represent any obstacles in the way of work in management positions. As participant three explains:

Through my personal experience, I do not think that these psychological factors affecting women's work. What I think is that women can work in management with these factors, without forming any obstacle in their work as managers.

4.2.1.1.3 Social and family factors

Most of the participants believed that the social factors play an important role in limiting the representation of women in management, where Interviewee 11 said:

I think that the majority does not accept the work of women in leadership positions. Oman as a society is still not accepting women as leaders, or they believe that a man is more appropriate. The evidence of that is the lack of an elected community of women in the “Shura Council” and their preference for men more to women.

According to participants, there are some perceptions within the society concerning women as managers. Among these perceptions in the community are the ideas that women are less efficient in the management work than men and such jobs are still associated with men. Men devote more time to their work. These positions also require a strength of character, which is more available to men than women. Women also tend to form human relationships at work and this, it was believed, does not conform to the nature of leadership. As a female interviewee (5) explained:

Such jobs are still associated with men. Most people think that such positions need to reflect strength of character and determination...This applies to men more than women, who tend to establish human relations than being firm in management.

As Interviewee 7 (female) also said:

In Oman, especially, because it is governed by social norms and traditions, in addition to education of women, [because women began to study in a later time], as well as the customs and traditions in the Sultanate of Oman sometimes, all of these factors together, not allow women to be in managerial positions. Our society also considers such positions are only for men.

In addition to this, participant eleven perceived that society does not accept women to manage men in work for religious and social reasons. He believes that whoever is working in leadership positions should be able to provide justice and equality in the work, while the women are, in his conception, biased in the work, where he says:

The women-as-leaders issue is still dominated by the culture of the society. In other words, most people do not accept women as leaders ahead of men, because of family and religion aspects. Religious aspect is not significant in

all cases, but in some cases there are religious reservations for women to work as a leader. Also, a person who wants to be a leader has to be capable of dealing with professionals, and other employees, and has the ability to deliver justice and equality with the staff to not have a bias. Women, in general, have a type of bias, therefore, they are better to be with their families.

Participant twelve believes that it is possible to divide society into two categories in terms of women managers. The first category is the category of intellectuals, who grew up in the era of education after 1970. He thought these intellectuals would not be opposed to the employment of women in managerial positions. The second category is the general public, and these people are still opposing women working as managers for the social reasons. He said:

It is possible to divide the community here into categories. Class intellectuals, I cannot imagine their opposition to the work of women in managerial positions. However, the general public still has reservations on women's employment as managers, and they still represent the majority. And I think that religion and social customs play a key role in the adoption of this opinion, we are a conservative society and this limits the choices for women.

Most participants believed that the social factors affect women's and parents' choice to work in managerial positions. The majority of respondents think that women in managerial positions would be more concerned about their family than their work. They also preferred to remain in other work (non-managerial work) in order to provide adequate care for their families and homes. Also, some women avoid working in managerial positions because they prefer the auspices of their families and home. Men managers, in contrast, are able to sacrifice their time in order to work at the expense of their families and their children. Administrators can also rely on them at all times, unlike women. As Interviewee 9 (male) explained:

In my view, when a director of the organisation takes a decision to employ a man, I think, he may be right, because the manager is able to rely on men in all times in every work, but it might be for women there are some reservations, because women can work only in periods of the work time then she has to go back to her family. I think that there is a difficulty for women

associated with her husband and children and related family of how she strikes a balance between work and home. However, if her over-time work was frequent, it makes women think twice about accepting this job, except if she has a full-time job without family or children.

The participants also believed that the basic function of women is motherhood and they are responsible for their family and home. Participants also assumed that those responsible for work do not prefer women for leadership positions because women require much time off to look after their families and children. While some believed that parents and husbands refuse to allow their female relatives to work in managerial positions for several reasons, including mixing with men at work, and needing more time than other jobs, which affects the care women can take of their family. Interviewee 11(male) said:

If I put myself in the place of leaders, for example, and I wanted to choose a manager I would choose a man, because the lives of women require them to take allot of time off, such as maternity leave and other family factors that are occupied her house and her children and this affects their concentration in the work. The reasons can be summarised as the social and cultural reasons and family. I think, if women want to work in leadership positions, should sacrifice by their family duty. I think that it is difficult for a woman to be a leader because of family obligations and therefore she cannot commit times required for managerial work

4.2.1.1.4 Religious factor

The impact of religion is another fact on which appeared in the participant responses. They perceive of that understanding of the Islamic religion and the text of the Holy Quran could influence the existence of women in managerial positions. They also believe that some women in the society avoid working in leadership positions because of the likelihood of having to mix with men. This avoidance is sometimes the choice of women themselves and, at other times, the choice of fathers and husbands. Interviewee 5 (female) said:

Mixing may also be another factor ... it's prevalent in such jobs for a woman to come into contact with the other gender, and therefore there are women who prefer or whose husbands and fathers prefer them to avoid such jobs.

4.2.1.2 The acceptance of women as managers

Most male and female participants, from the personal point of view, believed that it was acceptable for women to work in positions of leadership. They perceived that women have the abilities which enabled them to be in such positions. The participants also perceive women as having the ability to make quick and decisive decisions at work. They also possessed scientific competences and administrative efficiency, because they graduated through different positions before they reached a leadership position, so they have the experience which enable them to be in top positions. Interviewee 5 (female) explained:

I think if you asked such a question 20 years ago, the answer would have been that it was not acceptable for women to be in managerial positions as being our society was a masculine one, and considered the role of women as in her home and with her children. Now, thanks to a government policy that works to provide opportunities and support for women to prove themselves and to work together with men, I think it is accepted for women to work as leaders, just as it is for men, and to prove themselves and efficiency.

Interviewees also perceived women as they have the competencies, skills and the character of leaders, for example, when they work in these positions, they use all their abilities and energy in the service of their jobs. They are committed to their work. Participants believed in the women's abilities because they have proven their capabilities through many examples of women working in ministerial and managerial positions, and they even excel in work more than men. As Interviewee 9 (male) said:

I think it is natural that women occupy such positions as heads of departments or as a director or director-general in the public sector or the private sector as well. Because in fact there are many women who have proven their capabilities, and perhaps even excel in work more than men. There are many examples that confirm the success of women in these positions. Women are

able to succeed; I do not see that there is any reason to prevent women working as managers.

However, two of the male participants preferred women, if they want to work in leadership positions, to work only in sectors where she will be responsible for women such as education and health. These participants gave the reason for their opposition to the work of women as managers as being that the work of women in these positions will distract women from their core functions, which are managing their houses and raising their children. Interviewee 12 (male) explained:

It is possible for women to be a leader and president, but she is not suited to work in all sectors, but in particular sectors she could be the leader, such sectors as those in which most workers were women, such as schools, for example, where women can bring out their leadership skills.

One female participant (7) proposed that it was accepted for women to work in managerial positions but only after they pass relevant exams and had some training courses. She believes that men are leaders by nature, while women could be managers with education and training. She suggested:

Yes, accepted, but women holding such positions must have to pass tests or training courses, because the nature and characteristics of women do not qualify them for such jobs, and in order to occupy work, not of their nature, it is necessary for her to attend sessions and learn the skills required.

When asked if she thought that a man did not need such courses, she explained:

Of course it's required, but certainly, he doesn't need them, not like women [men also need some courses, but less than women] because the nature of man is that he was created to be a leader. In general, most men have this feature, it is even mentioned in the Quran that men are the guardians of women.

Participants were also asked about whether they would prefer to work with men or women managers and the reasons for their choice. Five participants (four males and one female) preferred to work with male managers. Explaining their choice, they said that there were barriers and differences when they dealt with female managers, and that men were more able to bear the work responsibility than women and as Interviewee 7 (female) justified:

Through dealing with women managers, I feel that women lack the flexibility, especially when they deal with women. I do not know what exactly the reason, but she is not flexible and she tend to treat her colleges in aggressive way. But if men managers usually respect women employees, I prefer to work with men, not women.

She also added:

Of course, in my work I deal with women executives. Frankly, they are aggressive in dealing with us. It is the opposite way when they deal with men. Because I am a woman, she treated me without taking any consideration [this women managers usually ignore her].

Participant 9 (male) explained the reasons why he preferred to work with male managers:

I prefer to work with male manager because he is more flexible than woman. I can discuss and argue with male managers, and my dialogues will be more positive with men. Men are capable to withstanding such a dialogue, but women cannot sustain such a dialogue because of their emotions. However, if I have opportunity to work with women, I will gladly accept that. We have worked with women as colleagues work. I accept the work under the management of women, as I 'am now working under the leadership of Minister of Higher Education, and things are going well.

Through interviews it can be seen that working with women managers make male employees to behave conservatively when they deal with women at work. This type of reservation in the transaction makes some people prefer to work with male managers, where the Interviewee 11 (male) stated:

I prefer to work with males. Through my work with woman manager, she did not give me my full rights as an employee. For example, when I produced any work, she did not appreciated and do not promote this action to the employee; therefore, I did not feel comfortable. During my work with women managers there were many barriers between me as a man and these women managers. So I think I am more daring and creative in working with a man. Also, I thought that I put forward an idea or oppose or I said different opinion, the man manager more than welcomes these ideas and encourage me. I also noted that the man was more capable of decision-making compared to women. Women have a kind of fear of making quick decisions and being decisive.

Also when I make a suggestion or provide feedback to the woman manager, she consider these suggestions as criticism of her and her views, while the man welcomes these proposals and enhances them.

Participants 5 and 6, who were both females, prefer to work with women managers because they believe that women gave what they could to their work, which make it easy to work with them. As Interviewee 5 (female) explained:

What I remember is the desire of women managers for their commitment to work and complete it on time, and sacrifice, sometimes at the expense of their family and their home and enhances performance and sacrifice to take account of their employees.

Although some participants believed that women managers should no interest in human relationships within organisations, the establishment of such relationships are a feature of the women's management (Grant, 1988). Participant 6 believed that is an important reason to work with women. He said:

I prefer to work with female managers, because women managers are often intense on building human relations between them and the rest of the staff, which allows an individual to work more freely. The men managers assume that the employees are a group of people who should work according to the pattern of a particular program, while women managers tend to deal with employees as human beings.

The other participants (one male and one female) consider that gender is not important in the selection of a manager so long as he or she has sufficient skills.

4.1.1.3 The view of the society about women managers

Interviews also indicated the view of society about women as managers. Five participants, mostly female (2 males and 3 females), believe that society accepted the idea of women in leadership positions. They indicated that the most important issue is the acceptance of the society because women acquire the necessary skills for these positions, and they demonstrate their success in managerial positions through a large number of examples in the Sultanate of Oman. However, those participants acknowledged that there were still some people in the society who opposed the work of women in these positions and who believed that men were more competent to be managers. As Interviewee 5 (female) explained:

I think it is acceptable for women to be in managerial positions. There are, in my view, more than 97% of the members of the community who accept the idea of women working as managers. I do not deny that there are some opponents of women undertaking such roles, but I think they are a few in some areas and because of their faith to the idea of patriarchal society.

Some participants support the view that some of Omani people still resist women being in leadership positions. They think that people still prefer men to hold these positions and women should work in positions that suit their nature such as teaching and nursing. Participants one and two believe that it is possible to divide society into two categories. The first category accepts women's employment in such positions, while the other category is opposed to the idea. As the first participant noted, the category that accepts the work of women is the intellectual class in the society, while the category representing the opposition illustrates the traditional attitudes of society.

Participants also considered that there was a change in the perceptions of society towards women's work in managerial positions for many reasons. The first reason is the support that women receive from the government. The second reason is the law that ensures women's equal rights and duties with men. Finally, a change in the culture of the community and the acceptance of women's work in such positions also form a catalyst for women to work in these positions.

Participant 9 explained:

More recently, the situation is different, it is normal for women to occupy positions of leadership and managerial or administrative responsibility in the public sector in particular. As we see in the private sector that women have also held very sensitive positions such as in the banks or companies such as companies of the PDO [Petroleum Development of Oman] or companies now existing in the "Shura council", we find the fact that now there are women working in administrative positions well not too bad.

He also said:

I think that people seemed aware of changes, and changing cultural and social realities about the work of women as managers. What has helped to change the situation is the High Commissioner of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and the government that gave women a prominent place in society, and the best example is the symposium that was held on the issues of Omani women, and

also there are women working and researching in the Women's Rights Committee, and women reaching the State Council, reaching the rank of minister and Deputy Minister and Director. This confirms that there are successive victories for women in both the social and economic aspects, and also women working in the diplomatic corps, there are now ambassadors outside the Sultanate, the Sultanate's ambassador in the United States and Germany and the Netherlands. These are real examples of the success as of women in such positions. People's thinking has begun to change and they come to believe that women are half of the society; therefore, they must be involved like men in all sectors, with the reservations of some people towards the work of women in these positions concern, for example for religious, social, family and the nature of women's self and her psychology reasons. Through the findings, there did not seem to be significant influence of gender, work experience with women managers, and being overseas on attitudes towards women managers. For example, participants from both genders illustrated that women have the abilities and competences and that it is acceptable for them to work in managerial positions. Only two males thought that women were not able to be in leadership positions, while only one female thought that women had to achieve exams and training courses to be able to work in managerial positions. Regarding the experience variable, also there were 8 participants who believed that women were able to occupy such positions, while 2 participants who thought that it was not acceptable for women to work as manager have experience of working with women managers. This may reflect that the experience of working with women managers may have more influence on attitudes than gender variable; however, it is not a significant impact. Most of the participants had previously lived overseas, and the majority thought women could work as managers. Only one of participant who thought it is not acceptable for women to work in leadership and he had been overseas for four years. The other person with the negative attitudes had never been overseas.

4.1.1.4 Competencies women need to succeed in managerial positions

Participants suggested that there were several competences which could help women succeed in their work in leadership positions. First, they believed that

women had to insist on education and obtained high certificates which were enable women to work side by side with men in leadership positions. As a part of managerial position requirements, women had also to have skills to enable them to use the new technology and modern means of communication. Women also had to learn about the experience of working in these positions from women who had worked in management in order to avoid negatives and mistakes they had made. Participants also mentioned that women had to be able to speak at least two or three languages, because they had to communicate with people from different cultures. Second, women should have the skills of decision-making. In making decisions women had to monitor their emotions and must base their decisions on a systematic and scientific process. Women should also have flexibility in their dealings with staff and in their decisions. A strong personality helps women to bear the responsibilities of these positions to treat the staff equally, and had the abilities to motivate their staff. Third, to focus on the requirements of managerial work, women should have a balance between the demands of work and responsibilities of home and family. Finally, women should benefit from the presence of men in managerial positions and take advantage of the experience gained by men rather than engage in conflict with them to fill these positions. They have to believe that each and every one of them complements the other work in these positions.

4.1.2 The second theme: Managers' communication competences

Participants also asserted their perceptions about the communication competences of Omani women. First, they described the communication competences that should be obtained by managers in general. Second, they provided their opinions about communication competencies of Omani women managers.

4.1.2.1 Communication competencies required for managers

Participants emphasised that managers must have communication skills to succeed in their work. Managers, first, have to make the aim of their communication clear to others, as they should deliver a message that is easy, clear and understandable. They also have to be good speakers and listeners to be able to communicate with employees without any barriers. They also mentioned that

managers have to be close to their staff and listen to their opinions without any bias. Managers also communicate with people from different cultures; therefore, they must be able to have the ability, knowledge, and language to communicate. They also have to be able to talk, explain, and negotiate within groups of people. Finally, they need to have the abilities required to use new technology such as phones, computers, the internet and email. As participant six observed:

The manager has to be a good discussant, able to deliver messages to employees in an easy and understandable way, and able to give explanations to large groups. The leader has to be a good listener to the views and ideas of others, able to accept feedback from them and understand their needs, and also be able to use new media effectively such as the Internet, email, phone and other means. In addition a manager has to be competent in written communication and to respond to official correspondence received.

4.1.2.2 Communication competences of Omani women managers

The majority of participants agreed that, generally, women managers in the Sultanate of Oman possess the communication competencies required for managerial positions. Omani women managers have obtained these skills, according to participant 1, through the work stages they passed through until they reached the leadership positions. They also mentioned that some Omani women often possessed more of these skills more than men managers, and with the passage of time they will overcome the communication difficulties which they face. Interviewee 6 (female) explained:

I think that women managers in the Sultanate of Oman have a good number of these skills, which no doubt they gained through the stages of study and training which they are now getting. But there remain some difficulties faced by women in the process of the communication. For example, we live in a patriarchal society, with a predominantly male labour sector, so it is difficult for women to have a dialogue among a large number of men. Also, managers in the Sultanate of Oman need time to acquire the necessary expertise to continue to work with all segments and all the communication skills required.

With the passage of time, women in the Sultanate of Oman will be able to gain these competencies.

However, participants also observed a number of communication competencies lacking in women in the Sultanate of Oman. According to the participants, some women managers in Oman lacked in self-confidence and courage in dialogue and speaking in large groups, especially, when most of audience surrounding women managers are males. They were also impulsive and had a quick reaction in some situations without thinking. Some women managers were also arrogant when they have authority; therefore, they did not listen to the opinions of others.

Furthermore, some participants mentioned that women require much explanation to deliver a simple idea. However, a majority of the participants believed the main reason for the existence of such difficulties was a lack of the work experience of women managers, and with the passage of time and more experience, these difficulties will disappear.

Participants also made comparisons between the competencies of communication of male and female managers. They was a wide variation in their views about who had more efficient components than the other and in the quality of these competencies, while some believe that there is no difference in the competencies of communication between males and females. The participants pointed out that, male managers, on the one hand, are more able to manage dialogue and communicate with large groups compared to women managers. They are also better at written communication and accepting feedback from others, and they tend to take shortcuts when giving their messages at work. As participant five said:

I think that men have greater confidence than women in the field of management, which is reflected in their communication, as well as the force of their personalities which also plays a role in the way of dialogue. Men, in my view are more persuasive and this may be due to the number of men in most meetings compared to women. For example, you may attend a meeting, with eight men when there is one woman director and this undoubtedly is reflected in the style of dialogue of each of them.

Women managers, on the other hand, are better in language skills and verbal fluency than men. They are also more interested to communicate with their staff and inform them of the work goals. Finally, the participants mentioned that women managers have more ability in written and oral communication. While the remaining participants (2 males and 2 females) stated that there is no difference in communication competencies between male and female managers. The competencies where male managers could excel over females are only because of years of study, work and travel, which male managers have, and over time, women will have these competencies and then perhaps will be superior to men. As participant two explained:

I do not think that there are differences in skills between men and women, but women lack the experience to be able to keep up with the efficiency of men. With the passage of time they will acquire these skills and perhaps will become superior to men.

4.1.3 The third theme: The future of women managers

In this theme participants focused on the ambitions and the supports of the Omani government for women to work in managerial positions.

4.1.3.1 The ambitions of Omani women

The interviews also indicate the views of participants about the future of women as managers in the Sultanate of Oman. All participants agreed that most Omani women had the ambition to work in managerial and leadership positions. Omani women want to prove themselves through success in such positions. In addition, they want to prove to the society that they had the competencies, capabilities, and skills necessary to work in these positions just as men do. Interviewee 1 (male) explained:

Women work hard and they show their ability more than most men do; because the opportunity is automatically available for men, but for women to reach managerial positions they have to adapt in their work with these challenges surrounding them; because there is difficulty in accepting women as heads of administrative positions.

Participants also suggested that there were several factors prompting women to aspire to work in these positions. The first factor was the governmental support and the equality between women and men in rights, duties, and privileges. The second reason was that women now were able to learn and gain the highest educational certificates which enable them to work in these positions. The third reason was the changes on society's perception, and the awareness of the importance of women's work in these positions because they represent half of society. Finally, the existence of several models of women managers in Oman, who have been successful in filling such positions, form an incentive for women to follow them and run the same experience. Participant five said:

Earlier, women were avoiding work in such positions, for several reasons. First, due to a preference for her responsibilities in the home and family to work. Second, fear of the responsibilities of this type of work and the fear of failure and linking these positions to positions of patriarchy form a barrier between women and these positions. Now, several of the models have been successful in this area, and this situation has encouraged women to compete with men, the support of the government, and the equality with men in rights and duties.

Two of the male participants considered that Omani women still did not have enough ambition to work in leadership positions and the care of families and houses still has priority over employment in such positions. As participant eleven indicated:

From my point of view, I think that most women in the Sultanate avoid working in these positions, for the reasons mentioned previously. Especially, family reasons where she prefers her family over work as well as some customs and traditions and perceptions, sometimes these reasons make women avoid these positions.

4.1.3.2 The governmental support

All participants pointed out that the Omani women receive support and encouragements from the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to be able to work in managerial positions.

The types of support mentioned by the participants included: to the stated equality between men and women in rights and duties and privileges without discrimination. The second type of support was the seminars and discussions on the status of women in the Sultanate of Oman to discuss the problems and obstacles that stand in the way of women's full representation in the community, commensurate with being half of society. The third is the identification of the 17th of October of every year to be the day of Omani women. The fourth is the enactment of many laws that ensure women's employment in all sectors, without hindrance. Finally, guarantee the equality of women and men in education and training opportunities without discrimination. Participant nine indicated:

First, raising the status of women continues the promotion of women through seminars and giving them the opportunity to work in leadership positions. Holding seminars to study the situation of women in Oman. For example, the last seminar of Omani women. Declaring "the Day of Omani Women" to be celebrated on October 17 is also an incentive to them. Inclusion of women in the Commission on Human Rights, which was formed by His Majesty. Provision of an opportunity for women to work in the public and private sectors, because women are taking their natural place to work within the Omani society as a strategic partner for men in these positions. Finally, equality between men and women in terms of salaries and training, opportunities and rewards. The area is open, without a preference, for men and women to participate in.

All participants also believed that the government support to Omani women is sufficient and there is no need for more encouragements at this stage. Women in Oman have a full opportunity to get to these positions by demonstrating their abilities and their competencies to take advantage of all opportunities available to them by the government and the community to work side by side with men in all positions and sectors. Interviewee 5 (female) said:

I do not think that there is a need for more support. Omani women have been able to take their rightful place in a relatively short time compared to the rest of the nations that preceded the Sultanate's development. But in order for women's access to reach the same extent as that gained by men, they need

more time. Over this time women will share with men in all acts of leadership and who knows perhaps surpass them if they proved their efficiency at work.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter I have presented the findings of the research into attitudes of Omani women as managers and the perceptions of their communication competencies. The results illustrate that people in the Sultanate of Oman, generally, were positive towards women managers and their communication competencies. In both qualitative and quantitative analyses there are no significant influences of gender or experience of working with women managers in these perceptions. The results also indicated that there is a weak correlation between the two attitudes and perceptions of communication competencies.

In the next chapter I discuss the findings and linking them to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study explored the attitudes of Omani women managers and perceptions of their communication competencies. It also examined the influence of gender and working experience with women managers. Finally, it examined the relationship between perceptions of women managers and perceptions of their communication competences. In this part of the study, I discuss the results and link them with the results of previous studies in chapter two.

5.1 Omani women as managers in the Sultanate of Oman

The study revealed a number of issues related to Omani women as managers. These issues are of interest to the Omani society, in general, and jointly women and the Omani government, in particular. The results showed the presence of some obstacles, despite the support found for women, still restrict the representation of women in these positions. These findings were discussed in the following sections with regarding to the results of literature.

5.1.1 Individuals and social points of view about women managers

The first research question in this study was: what are the attitudes of the Omani people towards women as managers, and are there differences according to gender and work experience in these attitudes?

The findings of this study indicated that Omani people held positive attitudes towards women managers. This result was drawn from both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Fifty nine percent of the questionnaire respondents showed positive attitudes towards Omani women managers, and most male and female respondents to the qualitative component believe that it is acceptable for women to work in positions of leadership. This finding is consistent with other research, which found that people have positive attitudes towards women managers, such as Chow (1995) in Hong Kong, Cordano, Scherer, and Owen (2002) in the United States and Chile, Beutell (1984) with American business undergraduate and MBA students, Guney, et al (2006) with Pakistani people. However, these results are not consistent with some other studies, for example, Mihail's (2006a) with

undergraduate students in Greece and Liff, et al (1997) in the UK. A possible explanation for this is that studies such as (Dubno, 1985; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Ginige, 2007; Hayes & Allinson, 2004; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007; Maher, 1997; Mihail, 2006a, 2006b; Schein & Mueller, 1992; Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, & Smith, 1977) show people's attitudes are usually influenced by their stereotypes and their perceptions.

The participants in this study showed positive attitudes and perceptions towards women as managers. For example, based on the results of interviews, respondents believe Omani women have sufficient skills to be managers. They also believe that women possess the competencies of communication which qualify them to work in such positions. The most important thing is that they believe that women are able to be managers because of the recent success of many women as both government ministers and ambassadors in Oman. These stereotypes generated positive attitudes towards women as managers. In addition, they believe that the perceptions of society towards women's work in managerial positions have changed because of the support that women receive from the government, the law that ensures women's equal rights and duties with men, changes in the culture of the community and the acceptance of women's work in such positions.

In terms of the influence of gender and experience of working with women, the results show that there is no significant influence for either gender or experience on attitudes towards women managers. This result is in agreement with Chow (1995), in terms of genders influence on attitudes. The result also partly agrees with Mihail, (2006) who concluded that there was a significant influence of genders on attitudes while experience of working with women managers has no significant influence on attitudes. The result disagrees with studies by Bowen, Yan Wu, Hwang, and Scherer (2007); Cordano, Scherer, Owen (2002); Mostafa (2005); Prime, Jonsen, Carten, and Maznevski (2008); and Wheelless and Berryman-Fink (1985) in that these studies show gender to be a significant factor in influencing attitudes. A possible explanation for this finding is that, when women obtain the opportunity to work in leadership positions, they work to prove their abilities and to prove that women are able to work in these positions just as men are. These efforts of women in their managerial work could influence people's perceptions, stereotypes, and attitudes of women managers. Another

possible explanation is that, as mentioned previously, in Oman there are recently many women in public leadership positions. These women have proven the efficiency of women in leadership. Furthermore, there is an annual meeting conducted with the public in *Majles Al shura* (the Consultative Council) which allows most people to have a reasonable idea about the efforts made by woman in order to succeed in leadership positions. This has led to a change in perceptions regardless of gender experience with women in managerial positions.

5.1.2 Factors of under-representation of women in managerial positions

The study also found that educational, managerial (professional), psychological, familial, societal, and religious factors play an important role in the representation of women in leadership positions in the Sultanate of Oman. First, in terms of educational and professional factors, participants indicated that the delay in the participation of women in education was a factor for their delayed participation in the work. This result is in agreement with Al-Lamki (1999), Al Khaduri (2007), and Donn and Issan (2007). All of these studies mentioned that there were no schools for girls until 1970; women were not able to go to school and they were obliged to do the housework. This situation led to several managerial consequences which influence the representation of women in leadership. First, this situation makes for more men than women in the workforce and managerial positions. Therefore, men acquired much experience that made them further qualified and the preference to some of those responsible, who still make a link between men and managerial positions. Second, women, in contrast, are seen to lack the work experience, personality, and skills which are required to such positions. Nowadays, there is a significant increase in number of women in these positions as the number of graduates has increased and women have started to gain the necessary expertise to work in managerial positions. This interpretation was supported by the participants. Most of the participants pointed out that the status of women in the Sultanate of Oman has had a significant change in terms of an increase in the number of female graduates, representation of women in the labour force, and their success in managerial positions. This interpretation is also in agreement with

Claes (1999) and Olsson & Walker (2003) who attributed an under-representation of women to a lack of experience of women in the workforce.

The findings of this study also indicated that there are some psychological factors that affect the work of women as managers. These psychological factors are the fear of failure in these positions because of the large number of responsibilities attached to the positions and the impact of pregnancy, childbirth and the menstrual cycle. This result is in agreement with Claes's (1999) findings which showed that women lack confidence and aspirations, seek approval, and fear of abuse of power. It also agreed with Guney et al (2006) who believe that women cannot undertake managerial responsibilities because they are not well educated or experienced. One explanation for this is that, as is mentioned in Guney et al (2006) women lack experience which is required for leadership positions because they will take these responsibilities on for first time. We can conclude that at the current stage it is better to increase training and give women time to gain experience rather than increase their number in such positions, which could lead to adverse consequences in the case of women serving in these positions without the accumulation of necessary expertise.

This study also revealed that family and social perceptions have an important effect on the representation of women in managerial positions in Oman. As already mentioned in Chapter 4, some Omani people still resist women accessing leadership positions. They think that people still prefer men to hold these positions and women should work in positions that suit their nature better such as teaching and nursing. They also mentioned that women preferred to remain in other work in order to provide adequate attention to their families and homes due to Islamic and Eastern culture, which make the concerns of the home and children a woman's responsibility. These findings are consistent with other findings (for example, Guney et al, 2006; Owen and Todor's, 1993; Ross, 2008; Smith, 2008). These studies indicated that women are likely to place work considerations after family demands and they prefer to spend most of their time looking after their children and their families rather than at work outside the home.

One explanation of these results, which Smith (2008) highlighted, is that the changes in economics, culture, and politics have enabled and encouraged the education and economic independence of women. These changes have transformed the position and perception of women throughout the world. Liff, Worrall, and Cooper (1997) also believe that there are significant changes in attitudes towards women as managers. In recent decades, this new way of perceiving women has only started to reach populations in most Muslim countries. Omani society is still passing through a transitional period. As previously mentioned in Chapters One and Two, Omani women started their participation in education and the workforce after 1970. Additionally, perceptions, stereotypes, and attitudes have changed since this time, as confirmed by one of the participants in the study (as mentioned in chapter 4), he said:

I think if you asked such a question 20 years ago the answer would have been that it is not acceptable for women to be in managerial positions as our society is masculine, and considers the role of women to be in her home and with her children. Now, thanks to a government policy that works to provide opportunities and support for women to prove themselves and to work together with men, I think it is accepted for women to work as leaders, just as it is for men and to prove themselves and their efficiency.

Participants also provided another important explanation of these changes to the society. Interviewee 12 mentioned that it is possible to divide society into two categories in terms of women's work as a manager. The first category is the category of intellectuals, who grew up in the era of education after 1970; he thinks they are not opposed to the employment of women in managerial positions. The second category is the general public and they are still, for social reasons, opposed to women working as managers. Women's participation in education and entry into the workforce helped markedly to change some perceptions which were prevalent in society, although there are groups in society still that hold different ideas.

The findings of this study have shown that some participants believe that the teachings of the Islamic religion and their understanding of the text of the Holy Quran may make some women avoid working in managerial positions. This

avoidance is due to the unwillingness of some women (or their relatives) to participate with men in the same work and mix with them because there are some texts in the religion, which refer to the separation of men from women at work. The same influence of the Islamic religion has been mentioned in many studies (for example, Al-Lamki, 1999; Marmenout, 2009; Smith, 2008; Sidani, 2004; Sidani & Gardner, 2000; Smith, 1979; Syed, 2007). A possible explanation for these findings is that some people in the society still believe that women should not work with men; therefore, they have to avoid such positions. Some people, on the other hand, hold different perceptions and they believe that as a result of the economic and social changes of the society, women's paid work has become necessary to satisfy the requirements of life. Also, women are already now working with men in organisations, there is no difference between the work in managerial positions and other work. Some participants also believe that women should work only as educational or health managers, as these jobs deal with people from same gender. The question than is, once there are sufficient numbers in such jobs, do women have to stop working? Generally, such perceptions still prevent some women for working in managerial positions because of whether by their own choice or their relatives.

Generally, these obstacles are common factors which could face women in different communities as indicated in the literature review. Most of these studies pointed to the existence of these perceptions and stereotypes in many countries such as Greece, the United States, Britain, and some Arab and Islamic countries. The results also suggest that such obstacles do not constitute a real impediment in the presence of continued government support for women and, if there is gender equality and women's success that take advantage of the opportunities available to them, they would prove their abilities and efficiency in managerial work. As Participants also pointed out, from their point of view, women have to acquire experience, which is the fundamental difference between women and men due to the earlier presence of men in such positions and due to delays in women's education in Oman.

The findings also indicated that both gender and experience of working with women managers have no significant influence on attitudes towards women managers.

5.1.3 Factors which assist women to move into managerial positions

The results suggested that there are several factors which could assist women to progress into leadership positions. First, women have to gain good qualifications by obtaining higher educational certification. It can be noted here that the participants linked between the past, present and future for women as managers. They mentioned that the delay in the education of women was a factor in the delay in their entering the managerial workforce. Therefore, they believe this is the main reason for the under-representation of women in management. This result is in agreement with Al-Lamki (1999); Al Khaduri (2007); and Donn and Issan (2007) who showed that women's access to education and access to the necessary expertise will lead them into leadership. Second, women have to obtain a number of skills like the use of modern technology in communication, flexibility in decision-making, and personnel skills to enable them to successfully enter management.

These skills, from the perspective of the participants, are basic skills for managers. Whatever the gender, managers will need knowledge of new technology in their communication with others. Participants in this research, through their experiences of working with different managers noted the lack of such skills in some managers, when they believe these skills are the key to the success of any manager in his work.

5.2 Women managers' communication competencies:

This study also examined the Omani people's perceptions of women managers' communication competence, and the differences according to gender and work experience with this perception of women as managers' communication competence. The findings of this study show that Omani people believe that managers have to be good communicators. The participants indicated that managers have to possess good communication skills to succeed in their work. Managers have to make the aim of their communication clear to others, and their message has to be easy, clear and understandable. They also have to be good speakers and listeners to be able to communicate with employees without any barriers. They also mentioned that managers have to be close to their staff and listen to their opinions without any bias between them. Managers also

communicate with people from different cultures therefore they must have the ability, knowledge, and language to communicate. They also have to be able to talk, explain, and negotiate within groups of people. Finally they need to have the abilities required to use new technology such as phones, computers, the internet and email.

The findings indicated that Omani people held positive perceptions about Omani women managers' communication competences. This result was supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. The percentage of agreement on the WMCCS at all levels of acceptance (approval) was 53.8%, while the disagreement percentage was 37.5%. The results also showed that gender had no significant influence $p\text{-Value} (.925) > .05$ on perceptions of women managers' communication competencies, while there was a significant effect of experience of working with women managers on these perceptions. These findings partially agree with Wheelless and Berryman-Fink's (1985) findings which showed that female respondents, in American community, perceived that women managers had greater communication competence than did male respondents. In the Wheelless and Berryman-Fink's study, participants who had worked with/for women managers presented more positive attitudes towards women as managers and their communication competences than those who did not have such experiences. One possible explanation for these findings is that as one participant mentioned, most women who reached leadership positions had participated in the various administrative posts before arriving at these positions, which provided experience in communicating with others and, because men started to work earlier than women, they have more experience. Another possible explanation is that women who have reached these positions have had to pass many tests until they were selected; therefore, women in these positions should obtain these skills and experience. Furthermore, while in these positions, they also gained the opportunity to attend many training courses in various management and communication skills.

However, the results indicated that women still lack leadership communication skills compared with men; this was also found by Penley et al. (1991), who found that females generally reported poorer communication skills when compared with

males. Women managers have to gain self-confidence and they have a quick reaction in some situations without thinking. Some women managers are also arrogant when they have authority; therefore, they do not listen to the opinions of others. The results also indicated that women engaged in detailed explanation to deliver a simple idea. This is explained by the fact that women in the Sultanate of Oman have only reached the managerial level very recently, and they require several years to obtain experience. Therefore, the emergence of such results is justified recently. Some participants in the study explained that most obstacles appear in the women managers way as a result of their presence in the male dominated workplace, make them fall into such errors in their positions. According to the participants, a woman manager may attend a meeting and there are a large number of men without the presence of any other woman, she is likely to be intimidated, and this could affect her performance.

5.3 The future of women managers in the Sultanate of Oman

Although most previous studies indicated that among the commonly held stereotypes about women, including that they do not have enough ambition to work in managerial positions, the results of this study show that most Omani women have the ambition to work in managerial and leadership positions. They want to prove themselves through success in such positions, and they have the competencies, capabilities, and skills necessary to work in these positions just as men do. This result is supported by the quantitative result. Both genders (2.40 and 3.09 respectively) disagreed with item 17 of WAMS scale, which stated that “women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world”. This result is in disagreement with Guney et al. (2006), who found that women lack the necessary drive to succeed in business because they work for supplemental income. Many stereotypes also perceive women as a lack of ambition to reach senior managerial posts.

However, this result is in agreement with Budhwar et al, (2005). The situation has changed now, according to Budhwar et al, women in India are leaving their homes in order to search of work for two reasons-economic necessity and fulfilment of-ambitions while women with higher education have exposed a greater desire for independence and a greater degree of eagerness to undertake

managerial roles. “They have become more career-oriented, ambitious and aspire to rise rapidly up the organisation ladder” (Budhwar et al, 2005, p. 186). The reasons for this desire of Omani women in managerial work are, first, they have seen they can participate in the workforce, after getting an education. Second, women who complete their study and obtain higher certifications such as doctoral and masters degrees are often promoted into good administrative positions in the Sultanate of Oman. The third reason is the economic independence of women in many cases, as well as the adoption by some families of women's work the opposite of what was formerly a single dependence on men. Another explanation of this result is, as Maddock and Parkin (1994) claim, that the perceptions of women create a myth about women in their work environment, which determines women's expectations, sense of ambition and general confidence. Those who believe that women lack ambition must understand the sources from which ambition springs and how it can be thwarted. Most studies indicate that male managers think that women lack ambition, while the majority of women said they lacked encouragement and “were waiting for the ‘green light’ to contemplate promotion as a possibility” (Maddock & Parkin, 1994, p. 31).

In addition, Pringle (2006) argues that government legislations play an important role in diversity within organisations: “Legislation both leads and reflects popular opinion and it is a guide for normative action in organisations” (p. 10). The enactment of legislation, to some extent, can change behaviour, attitudes and values, and it also provides a significant indicator about the aspirations of societies.

From these statements it is clear that the work environment plays an important role in women ambition. The results of this study indicated that women obtain great support from the government of the Sultanate of Oman and also there were positive attitudes from both genders towards women managers. This led to the creation of good work environment for women, which helped to show the extent of women's ambition to work in managerial positions.

Findings also illustrated that women in the Sultanate of Oman obtain support and encouragement from the Omani government. Although the literature, suggest that women in many countries are exposed to different types of discrimination (e. g.,

Blum, Fields, & Goodman (1994); Gelfand, & Nishii (2007); Heilman (1997); Owen & Todor (1993); Maznevski (2008); and Prime, Jonsen, Carter, & Tharenou (1999)), the findings of this study showed that women in Oman have many advantages. The government of the Sultanate of Oman has made a great efforts and to encourage women to be part of the development process. For example, women in Oman enjoy equal opportunities with their male counterparts in both social and economical life. They also have full civil and political rights, including the right to take part in elections, and they can have membership on the Consultative Council (Majlis A'Shura) and State Council (Majlis A'Dawla). These results are supported by Al-Lamki, (1999) and Al Khaduri, (2007). However, the findings showed that, according to the participants, although women obtain plenty of support, there are many difficulties which have limited the representation of women in managerial positions. These results show that there are aspects where women are still in need of further support. For example, some participants mentioned that women lack some managerial competencies such as self-confidence and some communication skills. We can conclude from this that women still require further support and training to be equipped to work in such positions. The government also have to use the media to amend some of the prevailing stereotypes about women.

5.4 Relationship between attitudes of women managers and perceptions of their communication competences

This investigation also examined the relationship between attitudes of women managers and perceptions of their communication competences. The findings showed there is a significant relationship between perceptions of women managers and perceptions of their communication competences. This result provided support for the study of Wheelless and Berryman-Fink (1985), which concluded with the same result. However, these findings are not consistent with Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) which indicated that there is no relationship between interactions with women managers and attitudes towards women managers. This disagreement of results may be due to the different instruments used in those studies. The current study and Wheelless and Berryman-Fink (1985) used the WAMS and the WMCCS, while Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) used the

WAMS and scales of frequencies and satisfaction to measure the interaction and satisfaction with interaction.

5.5 The influence of gender and experience.

The results indicated that there is no significant influence for gender and experience of working with women in attitudes of women managers. These results are in agreement with Duehr and Bono (2006), Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995), and Mihail's (2006a) findings, which showed that there are no significant differences on variables such as age, work experience and cooperation with regard to female managers. A possible explanation for these findings is that most participants held positive attitudes towards women managers, because most women who have reach managerial positions achieved most of the skills and abilities required for these positions.

The findings also illustrated that gender has no significant impact on perceptions of women managers' communication competences, while the experience of working with women managers has a significant influence on these perceptions. This may be attribute to the fact that people who work with women managers can obtain a good idea about women's communication competences and this experience of working with women managers provide an opportunity for them to know more about women managers' communication skills.

5.6 Summary

The above discussion has affirmed much of the current perceptions about women managers in the Sultanate of Oman, and juxtaposed the findings of this study with the literature. The findings indicated that Omani people hold positive attitudes towards women managers and have positive perceptions about their communication competences. They also think there are several stumbling blocks, such as social stereotypes and managerial abilities, on women's path to managerial positions. Finally, they believe that Omani women have sufficient aspirations and encouragements to be in leadership positions.

In the concluding chapter, further suggestions will be provided for future research as well as recommendations about what can be done to address the issues of women managers in the Sultanate of Oman.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study followed by the limitations of the study. Recommendations for women's advancement and the need for further research are mentioned, and the conclusion.

6.1 Summary of the findings

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing new knowledge to the international body of literature on attitudes towards Omani women and perceptions of their communication competences. The study has shown that although Omani people have positive attitudes towards women working as managers, they still believe that women could face many barriers to reach an equal representation in managerial positions. Factors such as the level of education and training, managerial abilities, psychological, family and social, and religious factors could play an important role in explaining the under-representation of women in leadership position.

One of the more significant finding to emerge from this study is that there were a large number of requirements for women managers in terms of both managerial and communication abilities. The participants in this study suggested enabling women to work in leadership positions means they have to obtain high certificates to be able do these jobs well. They also have to increase their experience of working in these positions in order to avoid repeating the mistakes they have made. Participants also mentioned that women have to speak at least two or three languages, because they will communicate with people from different cultures. They also should have skills in decision-making and they need to monitor their emotions in their decisions. Women should also have flexibility in their dealings with staff and in their decisions. Finally, they require a strong personality to help them to fulfil the responsibilities of these positions and to treat the staff fairly.

In terms of communication skills, women need skills which enable them to use new technology and modern means of communication. They also have to make the aim of their communication clear to others, as they should deliver a message that is easy, clear and understandable. They have to be good speakers and listeners

to be able to communicate with employees without any barriers. Because managers have to communicate with people from different cultures, women must be able to have the ability, knowledge, and language to communicate with these groups effectively. They also have to be able to talk, explain, and negotiate within groups of people.

The second major finding was that Omani women have enough ambition and support from the Omani government, so they only require good qualification, work experience, time, and training to achieve equal representation with men. There also needs to be some modification of some social stereotypes about women managers, such as men have more abilities than women or that women characteristics are not suitable to hold managerial positions or preserving women as solely mothers and wives.

Finally, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between perceptions of women managers and perceptions about their communication competences. It can be concluded from this point that the skills of communication which women managers present could influence the attitudes of people towards women managers, and familiarly and improvement of these skills will be a good way to modify the negative perceptions.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

As with other studies, this study admittedly has certain limitations. The first limitation is that this study conducted over a limited period between 2009 and 2010, and using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the information. The current study included the attitudes towards women managers in the Ministry of Higher Education. The attitudes of people from other ministries and other sectors may or may not be similar to those employees working in the Ministry of Higher Education. The second limitation is the size of the survey sample, which was 208, so some caution should be exercised in generalising the results to other societies. Finally, the study focused on measuring only attitudes and perceptions but not real behaviour towards women managers.

6.3 Further research

Firstly, further research could be done on the same topic but on a larger scale, to include people from different ministries and other government organisations.

Secondly, further research could be done to examine the attitudes towards women managers in private sectors in order to make a comparison between situation of women in both the private and the public sectors in Oman.

Thirdly, further research could be carried out on the same topic but focusing on the experiences of women managers in order to examine the influence of these attitudes and perceptions on their working lives.

6.4 Recommendations

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice which are outlined below.

1. It is recommended that the attitudes towards women managers within the ranks of decision-makers in Oman be addressed, in order to examine if they still associate men with managerial positions, and if men are still the favourite to fill top positions.
2. It is also recommended that the experience of women managers be addressed to explore their challenges, needs, and how they think other people perceive them.
3. It is recommended that the government address the lack of skills and abilities women have and, as a part of the support for women managers, provide training courses to develop the skills of women in managerial positions.
4. Finally, it is recommended that awareness-raising programs be conducted to highlight the importance of working of women in managerial positions, and what women can provide to organisations. These programs could also play a role in modifying the negative stereotypes prevalent in society about women's management.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The Survey in English

SURVEY ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN MANAGERS

Thank you for participating in this survey. The aim of the research is to find out Omani people's attitudes towards women managers and perceptions of their communication competencies. This questionnaire has three sections. Section 1 consists of general questions about you. Section 2 contains a set of questions to measure how you feel about women managers in general. Section 3 contains another set of questions, to find out what you think about women managers' communication competencies. The two sets of questions used in this questionnaire are well-established scales that have been successfully used in many similar research studies.

There are no right or wrong answers. The survey seeks to find out YOUR opinions, feelings, or ideas. So please be honest. The responses you give are anonymous (please do not write your name on the questionnaire) and confidential. The data provided by respondents will be treated collectively and will be used for scientific research purposes only.

SECTION 1: Information about You

Please tick the box that represents your answer or write in the space provided as appropriate.

1. What is your gender?

1. Male []

2. Female []

2. What age group do you belong to?

1. 20-29 []

2. 30-39 []

3. 40-49 []

4. 50- or above []

3. What is your position?

-
4. What is your highest level of educational qualification?
 1. Pre-university []
 2. Graduate []
 3. Post-graduate []
 5. Have you ever studied or worked overseas?
 1. Yes [] (please go to question 6)
 2. No [] (Please go to question 7)
 6. If you have studied or worked overseas, please state below the country (or countries), the purpose (study or work), and the overall length of stay (years or months).
 - (a) Countries _____
 - (b) Purpose _____
 - (c) Length of stay overseas _____
 7. Have you ever worked with or for women managers?
 1. Yes [] (Please go to question 8)
 2. No [] (Please go to question section 2)
 8. How many women managers have you worked with/for?

 9. Approximately for how long altogether?
_____ years _____ months
 10. In general, on a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfying was your experience working with/for women managers (1 being “not satisfying at all” and 5 being “very satisfying”)?

SECTION 2: The Women as Managers Scale (WAMS)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement below by placing a tick (✓) in the box that represents your feeling.

N	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Agree	Neither Disagree nor	Neither Disagree nor	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	It is less desirable for women than men to have a job that requires responsibility.										
2	Women have the objectivity required to evaluate business situations properly.										
3	Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.										
4	Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programs										
5	Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers.										
6	On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organisation's overall goals than are men.										
7	It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.										
8	The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.										
9	Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.										
10	It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.										
11	The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.										
12	Women would no more allow their emotions to influence their managerial behaviour than would men.										
13	Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as managers.										

N	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity.								
15	On the average, a woman who stays at home all the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half time.								
16	Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.								
17	Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world.								
18	Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.								
19	Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.								
20	Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.								
21	Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.								

SECTION 3: Women Managers Communication Competencies Scale (WMCCS)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement below by placing a tick (✓) in the box that represents your feeling.

	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Women managers generally are good listeners.								
2.	Women managers generally have adequate writing skills.								

N	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3.	Women managers generally lack verbal communication skills.									
4.	Women managers generally lack nonverbal communication skills.									
5.	Women managers generally have pleasing voice qualities.									
6.	Women managers generally are skilled in showing empathy/sympathy to others.									
7.	Women managers generally have difficulty keeping listeners' attention.									
8.	Women managers generally have difficulty giving feedback to others.									
9.	Women managers generally are skilled in showing concern and understanding for others.									
10.	Women managers generally are capable of receiving feedback from others.									
11.	Women managers generally are disorganized.									
12.	Women managers generally have difficulty relating to others.									
13.	Women managers generally are open and receptive to others.									
14.	Women managers generally possess sensitivity.									
15.	Women managers generally lack sincerity.									
16.	Women managers generally lack honesty.									
17.	Women managers generally are flexible.									
18.	Women managers generally treat others as equals.									

N	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19.	Women managers generally have difficulty putting others at ease.								
20.	Women managers generally have difficulty being personable or friendly.								
21.	Women managers generally have adequate assertiveness skills.								
22.	Women managers generally have enough confidence in themselves.								
23.	Women managers generally have difficulty making public speeches or presentations.								
24.	Women managers generally have difficulty dealing with males.								
25.	Women managers possess adequate credibility.								
26.	Women managers generally are able to command enough authority.								
27.	Women managers generally have attitudes of superiority.								
28.	Women managers generally have talk too much.								
29.	Women managers generally are professional in attitude and appearance.								
30.	Women managers generally have no difficulty controlling their emotions.								

Appendix 2. The Survey in Arabic

استبانة حول الاتجاهات نحو عمل المرأة كمديرة والتصورات نحو كفاءة الاتصال لديها

أشكركم على مشاركتكم في هذا الدراسة والتي تهدف لمعرفة اتجاهات الشعب العماني نحو المرأة كمديرة وكفاءات الاتصال لديها. هذا الاستبيان يتكون من ثلاثة أجزاء. الجزء الأول يتكون من أسئلة عامة حول المشارك. الجزء الثاني يحتوي على مجموعة من الأسئلة لقياس مدى شعورك حيال المديرات بصفة عامة. الجزء الثالث يحتوي على مجموعة أخرى من الأسئلة ، لمعرفة ما رأيك في كفاءات الاتصال لدى النساء المديرات. كلا المجموعتين من الأسئلة المستخدمة في هذا الاستبيان هي خلاصة لمقاييس تم استخدامها بنجاح في العديد من الدراسات البحثية المماثلة.

ليست هنالك إجابات صحيحة وأخرى خاطئة. حيث يهدف هذا الاستطلاع لمعرفة آرائك ، ومشاعرك ، وأفكارك. لذا يرجى التزام الموضوعية في الإستجابات. علما بأن جميع الاستجابات التي تقدمها سوف تكون بدون أسماء (يرجى عدم كتابة اسمك على الاستبيان) وتتمتع بالسرية التامة. وسوف تعامل البيانات المقدمة من المشاركين بشكل جماعي، كما سوف تستخدم لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط.

أولاً: المعلومات الشخصية:-

يرجى وضع علامة (X) في المربع الذي يمثل الإجابة أو الكتابة في المكان المخصص.

11. الجنس:

ذكر أنثى

12. الفئة العمرية التي أنتمي إليها:

29-1 39-36 49-40 ما فوق

13. أعمل حالياً في:

منصب إداري أو قيادي موظف

14. المستوى التعليمي:

قبل الجامعي جامعي دراسات عليا

15. هل سبق لك ان درست أو عملت خارج السلطنة؟

[ارجو الذهاب للسؤال التالي]

نعم

[ارجو الذهاب للسؤال رقم 7]

لا

16. إذا سبق لك أن عملت أو درست بالخارج أرجو ذكر الدولة (أو الدول)، والهدف (دراسة، عمل)، عدد السنوات لوجودك خارج السلطنة (أشهر، أو سنوات):
أ - الدولة:

ب - الهدف من السفر:

ج- مجموع السنوات :

17. هل سبق لك أن عملت مع المرأة كمديرة:

[ارجو الذهاب للسؤال 8]

نعم

[ارجو الذهاب للجزء الثاني من الاستبيان]

لا

18. كم عدد النساء المديرات اللاتي عملت معهن:

19. كم مدة عملك مع النساء كمديرات تقريبا:

سنة

شهر

20. عموماً، بمقياس بين 1 إلى 5، ما هي درجة الرضا عن عملك مع أو لدى المرأة كمديرة (1 "كنت غير راض إطلاقاً" و 5 "راض جداً")؟

ثانياً: مقياس الاتجاهات نحو النساء المديرات (WAMS):-

يرجى الإشارة إلى أي مدى تتفق أو تختلف مع البيان أدناه عن طريق وضع علامة (X) في المربع الذي يمثل إتجاهاتك.

م	الفقرة	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	ما	أوافق إلى حد	متردد	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق بشدة
1	تفضل المرأة الحصول على وظيفة أقل مسؤولية مقارنة بالرجل..							
2	تمتلك المرأة الموضوعية المطلوبة لتقييم المواقف الادارية بشكل صحيح.							
3	تعتبر تحديات العمل أكثر أهمية للرجل عنها للمرأة.							
4	ينبغي أن يحصل كل من المرأة والرجل على نفس الفرصة للمشاركة في البرامج الادارية التدريبية.							
5	تمتلك المرأة المقدرة للحصول على المهارات الضرورية لتكون مديرة ناجحة.							
6	في المتوسط ، المديرات أقل قدرة على الإسهام في الأهداف العامة للمنظمة مقارنة بالرجال.							
7	يعتبر تبوء المرأة لمناصب قيادية أمر غير مقبول مقارنة بالرجل .							
8	في يوم ما سيتقبل مجتمع رجال الأعمال المرأة في المناصب الإدارية الرئيسية.							
9	على المجتمع تقدير عمل المديرات كما يقدر المديرين الذكور.							
10	من المقبول إجتماعيا أن تتنافس المرأة على المناصب الادارية العليا مع الرجال.							
11	احتمالية الحمل لا تجعل المرأة أقل قبولا للوظيفة مقارنة بالرجل.							
12	لا تسمح النساء لعواطفهن بالتأثير في قراراتهن الإدارية بعكس الرجال.							
13	من المفترض ألا تجعل المشاكل المرتبطة بالدورة الشهرية النساء أقل تفضيلا للمناصب الإدارية مقارنة بالرجل.							
14	لا يجب على المرأة أن تضحي ببعض خصائص أنوثتها لتكون ناجحة إداريا.							
15	في الغالب تعتبر النساء اللواتي يبقيهن في البيت طوال الوقت مع أبنائهن أفضل أمومة من النساء اللواتي يخرجن للعمل حتى وإن كان لنصف الوقت.							
16	تعتبر النساء أقل قدرة على تعلم المهارات الرياضية والميكانيكية مقارنة بالرجل.							

٤	الفقرة	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	ما أوافق إلى حد	متردد	ما أوافق إلى حد	لا أوافق بشدة
17	ليس لدى النساء الطموح الكافي ليكن ناجحات في عالم الأعمال.						
18	لا يمكن أن تكون المرأة حازمة في حالات الأعمال التي تتطلب ذلك.						
19	تمتلك المرأة الثقة بالنفس المطلوبة للقائد الجيد.						
20	المرأة لا تنافس بما يكفي لتكون ناجحة في عالم الأعمال.						
21	لا يمكن أن تكون المرأة صارمة في حالات الأعمال التي تتطلب ذلك.						

ثانياً: مقياس التصورات السائدة نحو كفاءة الاتصال لدى المديرات بوجه العموم (WMCCS):

يرجى الإشارة إلى أي مدى أنت تتفق أو تختلف مع البيان أدناه عن طريق وضع علامة (X) في المربع الذي يمثل إتجاهاتك.

٤	الفقرة	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	ما أوافق إلى حد	متردد	ما أوافق إلى حد	لا أوافق بشدة
1	المديرات عموماً مستمععات جيدات						
2	لدى المديرات المهارات الكافية في الكتابة.						
3	لدى المديرات عموماً نقص في مهارات الاتصال الشفهي.						
4	تفتقر المديرات عموماً إلى مهارات الاتصال غير الشفهي.						
5	لدى المديرات القدرة على اختيار نبرة الصوت المناسبة.						
6	تمتلك المديرات القدرة على إظهار التعاطف والتضامن مع الآخرين.						

							7	تعاني المديرات عموما صعوبات في جذب انتباه المستمع لفترة طويلة.
							8	تواجه المديرات عموما مشاكل في إعطاء التغذية الراجعة للآخرين.
							9	تمتلك المديرات عموما القدرة على إظهار الاهتمام وتفهم الآخرين .
							10	لدى المديرات عموما القدرة على تلقي التغذية الراجعة من الآخرين.
							11	المديرات عموما غير منظمات.
							12	لدى المديرات عموما صعوبة في التفاعل والاتصال بالآخرين.
							13	المديرات عموما متفهمات ومتقبلات للآخرين.
							14	تمتلك المديرات عموما حسا مرهفا.
							15	تفتقر المديرات عموما للإخلاص في العمل.
							16	تفتقر المديرات عموما الأمانة.
							17	تتصف المديرات عموما بالمرونة.
							18	تعامل المديرات الآخرين بالمساواة.
							19	لدى المديرات عموما صعوبات في التسهيل على الآخرين.
							20	لدى المديرات عموما صعوبة بأن يكن ودودات.
							21	تمتلك المديرات عموما مهارات الحزم الكافية في الإدارة.
							22	لدى المديرات عموما الثقة الكافية بالنفس.
							23	لدى المديرات عموما صعوبات في القاء الخطب العامة والعروض.

لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	لا أوافق إلى حد ما	متربد	أوافق إلى حد ما	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	الفقرة	ع
							لدى المديرات عموما صعوبة في التعامل مع الذكور.	24
							لدى المديرات عموما القدر الكافي من المصادقية.	25
							المديرات عموما قدرات على إعطاء الأوامر بحزم.	26
							لدى المديرات عموما الميل للتفوق.	27
							المديرات عموما يتكلمن كثيرا.	28
							المديرات عموما محترفات في التصنع وحب الظهور.	29
							المديرات عموما ليس لديهن صعوبات في السيطرة على مشاعرهن.	30

Appendix 3. Interviewee Profile in English

No. _____

[INTERVIEWEE PROFILE]

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Highest qualification

obtained: _____

In managerial position? Yes No

Location of interview: _____

Date (day and month): _____

Time of interview: From _____ to _____

Duration of interview: _____ minutes

Was interviewed taped? Yes No

Comments:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR WOMEN MANAGERS PROJECT

[1. INTRODUCTION]

First of all, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Your help is very much appreciated.

As I previously said, the purpose of the interview is to find out about Omani's people's attitudes towards women managers. I'm doing this research as part of my master's thesis at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. But before we start the interview, I would like you to read this information sheet. [*Hand information sheet to participant.*] It provides further details about the project, such as what it's about, how the information gathered will be analysed and used, what your rights as a participant are, and so on. Please feel free to ask questions if there's anything you're not clear about.

There are no right or wrong answers—I am interested in your own opinions and experiences. I'd like to also assure you that the information you give will be treated collectively, confidentially, and anonymously. So please be as honest as you can in your responses.

Shall we begin?

[2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION]

Transition: in the first part of the interview, I'd like to quickly ask a few background questions about you.

1. How long have you been in the workforce?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your highest level of educational qualification (for example, bachelor's degree, master's degree, PhD, etc.)?
4. What is your position in (name of organisation or department or college)?
5. *[If not obvious from the title of position]* Is this a managerial or leadership role?
6. What does your job involve? Can you give me a brief overview of what it is that you do? Just a few sentences would be fine.
7. Have you ever lived overseas?
 - If yes:
 - In what country (or countries)?
 - Was that for work or studies?
 - How long did you live overseas in total?
8. Have you ever worked with or for women managers?

If yes: how many?

Transition: Thanks for the background information. I would now like to ask you a few questions about women managers in general.

[3. WOMEN AS MANAGERS]

9. Literature has shown that women are underrepresented in managerial positions. That is, there are far more men than women working in a leadership role in organisations. In Oman, what do you think are the reasons for this?
 - Why do you think fewer Omani women are in managerial positions?

- What might be the factors that make women less favourable to fill leadership positions compared with men?
9. What do you, personally, think about women managers or women leaders?
- For example, do you think it is acceptable for women to be managers, directors, CEOs and so on?

What about culture?

10. If you don't think it is acceptable for women to assume leadership roles, why not?
11. In your experience, to what extent do you think women managers and directors and so on are accepted by Omani people?
- Do people accept them in these roles?
 - How well are they accepted?
 - If they are not accepted very well, why do you think that is?
12. What do you think are factors that help women succeed in management or leadership positions?
- What are abilities and skills necessary for women to be in leadership positions?
13. Do you think there are the physiological and social factors that could impact women leadership positions?
- If there are, what are these factors?
 - Do you think Omani people prefer men or women managers?
Why?

[3.1 If interviewee has NO experience working with/for women managers]

14. How would you feel if you were asked to work with a women manager or director?

15. If you have a choice do you prefer to work with men or women managers?
16. *[If interviewee doesn't want to work with women managers]* can you tell me why you wouldn't want to work with women managers? What are your reasons for your choice? Remember, I'm not here to judge you. What I need is your honest opinion. So please feel free say anything.
- : *Do you have any stories to share with us affected your choice?*

[3.2 If interviewee HAS experience working with/for women managers]

17. You said earlier that you have worked with women managers. How many women managers have you worked with?
18. Approximately for how long altogether?
19. Do you prefer to work with women managers or men managers? Can you please explain why?
20. In general, on a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfying was your experience working with/for women managers, 1 being "not satisfying at all" and 10 being "extremely satisfying"?
21. Do you have any memorable stories or examples or episodes to share with me that may help me understand your experience better? These stories could be negative or positive.
22. If you're not currently working with women managers, would you work with them again? Why or why not?

Transitions: Thank you very much for your help so far.

Literature has shown that a good leader is a good communicator. I would now like to ask you some questions about communication of leaders.

[4. COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES OF LEADERS]

23. What kinds of communication skills do you think people in leadership positions should have?

24. Do you think women managers in Oman possess these skills?
25. What communication skills do you think woman lack for the leadership roles?
26. Compared with men, are there communication skills and competencies that you believe women managers are better at?
 - If yes, what are they?
27. Do you think women face difficulties in their communication with others?
 - If yes, what are these difficulties?
28. Do you think there are personal differences between men and women in their communication process?
 - If yes, what are these differences?

Transition: You have been wonderful in sharing with me your opinions regarding women managers in Oman. Thank you very much. We're coming to the end of the interview now. I have only a few more questions to ask you.

[5. CONCLUSION]

29. Do you think Omani women want to be managers?

If not, why not? What would stop them to want to take on the leadership role in their workplace?
30. Do you think your department/college/organisation encourages women to be in managerial roles?
 - If yes:

What do they do to promote the idea? What are some examples of activities?

In any particular sectors/industries or everywhere?
 - If no:

Why do you say that?

Does it try to *discourage* women from being in managerial positions? How?

31. Do you think Oman should try to increase the number of women in

32. If yes, why?

- If no, why not?

Thank you very much for your time. Your help is greatly appreciated. If you think of anything else, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

[Record the time the interview ends.]

[Complete the interview profile as soon as possible after the interview.]

Appendix 4. Interviewee Profile in Arabic

رقم المقابلة: _____

أولاً: "بيانات المقابل"

الجنس: ذكر أنثى

العمر: _____

المستوى التعليمي:

قبل الجامعي جامعي دراسات عليا

المسمى الوظيفي: _____

تاريخ المقابلة: اليوم: _____ التاريخ: _____

وقت المقابلة: من _____ إلى: _____

مدة المقابلة: _____ دقيقة

تم تسجيل المقابلة بالمسجل الصوتي: نعم لا

ملاحظات:

أولاً: المقدمة

في البداية أود أن أتقدم لكم بجزيل الشكر للموافقة على المشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي. علماً بأن مشاركتكم محل تقدير.

كما قلت سابقاً أن الغرض من المقابلة هو معرفة تصورات الناس في سلطنة عمان حول المرأة كمديرة. حيث أنني أقوم بهذا البحث كجزء من رسالة الماجستير في جامعة ويكاتو في نيوزيلندا. ولكن قبل أن نبدأ الحديث ، أود منك أن تقرأ ورقة المعلومات هذه. [تسليم ورقة المعلومات للمشاركين] فهي تقدم مزيداً من التفاصيل حول هذا المشروع ، مثل موضوع الدراسة، وكيفية استخدام المعلومات التي يتم جمعها وكيفية تحليلها، وما هي حقوقك كمشارك ، الخ.... لا تتردد في أي لحظة من طرح الأسئلة إذا كان هناك أي شيء غير واضح خلال المقابلة.

ليست هنالك إجابات صحيحة وأخرى خاطئة ، أنا مهتم بأرائك وخبراتك الخاصة حول الموضوع. أود أيضاً أن أؤكد لك أن جميع المعلومات التي سوف تعطيتها ستعامل بشكل جماعي، وبشكل سري، وبدون ذكر أسماء، لذا يرجى أن تكون الاجابات واقعية قدر الامكان.

هل نبدأ المقابلة؟

ثانيا: المعلومات الاساسية:

في الجزء الأول من المقابلة ، أود أن أطرح بعض الأسئلة التعريفية السريعة عنك.

1. منذ متى وأنت تعمل في هذه الوظيفة؟

2. كم عمرك؟

3. آخر مؤهل

علمي؟

4. ما المسمى الوظيفي الذي تشغله؟

5. هل عملك من الأعمال

القيادية؟

6. هل سبق لك وأن أقيمت خارج السلطنة؟

إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم:

• ما هي الدولة أو الدول التي أقيمت فيها؟

• هل كان سفرك للعمل أم للدراسة؟

• ما هو مجموع فترة إقامتك خارج السلطنة؟

7. هل سبق لك أن عملت مع مديرات؟

إذا كانت الاجابة بنعم كم العدد؟

أشرك على المعلومات الأولية، وأود الآن أن أطرح عليك بعض الأسئلة عن المرأة كمديرة بصفة عامة.

ثالثاً: المرأة كمديرة

8. تشير الدراسات إلى أن المرأة تشغل عدد قليل من المناصب الإدارية، وأن عدد الرجال يفوق عدد النساء العاملات في المناصب القيادية في المنظمات والمؤسسات. في عمان ، ما أسباب ذلك في رأيك؟

• لماذا تعتقد أن عدد من النساء العمانيات في المناصب الإدارية قليل مقارنة بالرجال (ماهي الاسباب) ؟

• ما العوامل التي تجعل النساء أقل تفضيلاً لشغل المناصب القيادية مقارنة مع الرجال؟

9. ما هي وجهة نظرك الشخصية في المرأة كقائدة ومديرة؟
على سبيل المثال هل تظن أنه من المقبول أن تكون النساء رئيسات أقسام، أو مديرات تنفيذيات إلخ...؟ ولماذا تظن ذلك؟

ومن ناحيه ثقافية هل تعتقد أنه ثقافياً من المقبول أن تعمل المرأة كمديرة؟

10. إن كنت تظن أنه ليس من المقبول عمل المرأة في المناصب القيادية، فلم لا؟

11. من خلال خبرتك العملية إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن العمانيين يتقبلون المرأة كقائدة ورئيسة في العمل؟

- هل يتقبل الناس قيام المرأة بهذه الأدوار؟
- إلى أي درجة هي مقبولة؟

• إذا كنت تظن أن الناس لا يتقبلون عمل المرأة كمديرة ما هي الأسباب لذلك؟

12. ماهي العوامل التي تؤدي إلى نجاح المرأة في المراكز القيادية من وجهة نظرك؟
• ما هي القدرات والمهارات اللازمة من أجل أن تكون المرأة في المناصب القيادية؟

13. هل تعتقد أن هناك عوامل فسيولوجية (جسدية) واجتماعية يمكن أن تؤثر على المرأة في المناصب القيادية؟

• إذا كان هناك ، ما هي هذه العوامل؟

• هل تعتقد أن الشعب العماني يفضل المدراء الذكور أم الإناث؟ ولماذا؟

رابعاً: إذا كان المقابل ليست لديه خبرة بالعمل مع أو لدى مديرات:

14. كيف سيكون شعورك إذا طلب منك العمل مع مديرة؟

[إذا كان المقابل لا يرغب في العمل لدى مديرة] هل يمكن أن تخبرني لماذا لا تريد أن تعمل مع

المديرات؟

15. إذا كان لديك خيار هل تفضل العمل مع المدراء الرجال أو النساء؟

ما هي أسباب اختيارك؟ تذكر ، أنا لست هنا لأحكم عليك. ما أحتاج إليه هو رأيك بحيادية تامة. لذا لا تتردد في قول أي شيء.

► [مسبار] : هل لديك أي قصص ترويه لنا أثرت في إختيارك؟

خامساً إذا كان المقابل لديه الخبرة في العمل مع أو لدى المرأة كمديرة:

16. لقد قلت سابقاً أنه سبق لك العمل مع مديرات. كم عدد المديرات اللواتي عملت لديهن؟

17. بالتقريب كم هي الفترة الزمنية التي عملت فيها مع مديرات؟

18. هل تفضل العمل مع مدراء ذكور أم إناث؟ ما هي الاسباب لإختيارك؟

19. بصفة عامة ، على مقياس من 1 إلى 10 ، حدد مدى الرضى عن عملك مع أو لدى النساء كمديرات بحيث (1) ، كنت "غير راض على الإطلاق" ، و 10 "راض للغاية"؟

20. هل لديك أي قصص أو أمثلة تشاركها معي يمكن أن تساعدني في فهم أفضل لخبراتك في العمل مع المديرات؟ هذه القصص يمكن أن تكون سلبية أو إيجابية.

21. إذا كنت لا تعمل حالياً مع المديرات ، هل من الممكن ان تعمل لديهن مرة أخرى؟ لماذا أو لم

لا؟

شكراً جزيلاً لك على مساعدتكم حتى الآن.

تظهر الدراسات أن المدير الجيد هو المتواصل الجيد. والآن أود أن أطرح عليك بعض الأسئلة حول كفاءة الاتصال لدى القادة.

سادسا :كفاءات الاتصال لدى المديرين

22. ما هي كفاءات الاتصال التي ينبغي ان تكون لدى الأشخاص في المراكز القيادية؟
23. هل تعتقد أن المديرات في سلطنة عمان تمتلك هذه الكفاءات؟
24. في رأيك ماهي كفاءات الاتصال التي تفتقر إليها المرأة في المناصب القيادية؟
25. مقارنة مع الرجال ، هل توجد كفاءات ومهارات اتصال ، تعتقد أن المديرات أفضل فيها من المدراء ؟

• إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، ما هي؟

26. هل تعتقد أن المديرات تواجه صعوبات عندما تتواصل مع الآخرين؟

• إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هي هذه الصعوبات؟

27. هل تعتقد أن هناك اختلافات شخصية بين الرجل والمرأة في عملية الاتصال؟

• إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هي هذه الصعوبات؟

الانتقال : لقد كنت رائعا في إطلاعي على آرائك بشأن المديرات في سلطنة عمان. شكرا جزيلًا. نحن نقترب من نهاية المقابلة الآن. ليس لدي سوى عدد قليل من الأسئلة.

سابعًا: الخاتمة

28. هل تعتقد أن المرأة العمانية تطمح أن تكون مديرة؟

• إذا لم يكن ، لماذا لا؟ ما الذي يمنع المرأة من أن تطمح للحصول على أدوار قيادية في أماكن عملها؟

29. من وجهة نظرك هل هنالك تشجيع ودعم للمرأة في الدوائر والمنظمات في سلطنة عمان لتعمل في المناصب الإدارية؟

• إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم :

ماذا تفعل لترويج الفكرة؟ ما هي بعض الأمثلة لهذه الأنشطة؟

في أي قطاعات معينة / الصناعات أو في كل مكان؟

• إذا لم يكن كذلك :

ما هو السبب في ذلك؟

هل تحاول هذه المنظمات بطريقة أو بأخرى من وضع العقبات في طريق المرأة من أن تكون في المناصب الإدارية؟ كيف؟

30. هل تعتقد أنه ينبغي على سلطنة عمان محاولة الدعم لزيادة عدد النساء في المناصب الإدارية؟

• إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، لماذا؟

• إذا لم يكن كذلك ، لم لا؟

شكرا جزيلاً على وقتك. مساعدتك هي موضع تقدير كبير لدينا. إذا كنت تفكر في أي شيء آخر ، أو إذا كان لديك أي سؤال ، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي.

وقت إنتهاء المقابلة: _____

Appendix 5. The interviews participants' profile

N	Gender	Educational level	Work Experience (years)	Age (years)	Type of work Manager or not	Overseas experience	No. of women managers worked with
1	M	PhD	19	40	Employee	Study UK:3 years	2
2	M	PhD	10	33	Employee	Study: Jordan for 3 years	None
3	F	Master's	1	29	Employee	Study USA: bachelor for 5 years Australia: 2 years for master	1
4	M	Bachelor	4	35	Employee	No	3
5	F	Bachelor	13	34	Manager	Jordan: 4 years NZ: 4 months UK: 4 months Study & traning	1
6	F	Bachelor	3	25	Manager	No	4
7	F	Bachelor	9 years	33 years	Employee	No	None
8	F	Master's	1.5	26 years	Employee	1.5 years Australia: study	None

N	Gender	Educational level	Work Experience (years)	Age (years)	Type of work Manager or not	Overseas experience	No. of women managers worked with
9	M	PhD	10 years	46 years	Employee	Saudi Arabia :4Y Jordan: 4 Y Australia: 6 M Study	None
10	F	Master's	4 years	35 years	Employee	UK: 1 year Study	4
11	M	Bachelor	11 years	32 years	Employee	Egypt: 4 years Study	2
12	M	Master's	6 years	39 years	Manager	NZ: 4 years Study	3

Appendix 6. Application for ethical approval

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



1. Identify the project.

1.1 Title of Project

**Attitudes towards and Perceptions of Women Managers and Their
Communication Competencies in the Sultanate of Oman**

1.2 Researcher(s) name and contact information Abdullah Hamed Al-
Mahrouqi **E-mail:** ahka2@students.waikato.ac.nz

Department of Management Communication

Address: 9/6 Page Place, Hamilton , New Zealand **Mobile** (00964) 0212129255

1.3 Supervisor's name and contact information (if relevant)

Dr: Nittaya Campbell

E-mail:

nittaya@waikato.ac.nz

Department of Management Communication

Ph: (9647) 856 2889

1.4 Anticipated date to begin data collection

10 December 2009

2. Describe the research.

2.1 Briefly outline what the project is about including your research goals and anticipated benefits. Include links with a research programme, if relevant.

The study aims to investigate the attitudes of Omanis towards women managers in Oman and the perceptions of these managers' communication competencies. The study will also explore factors that may influence the attitudes and perceptions, such as gender and experience working with/for women managers.

2.2 Briefly outline your method.

To collect data, I will use a mixed method consisting of a questionnaire survey of approximately 200 participants and an interview of approximately 12. The questionnaire will ask participants to complete two scales: the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) and the Communication of Competencies of Women Managers Scale (CCWMS). These scales have been used extensively in a number of countries (see attached).

I will also interview 12 participants in order to obtain in-depth information that will complement survey results and enhance the research. The interview protocol is attached.

2.3 Describe plans to give participants information about the research goals.

I will meet participants in their offices and explain the research project to them and ask for their cooperation. If they are interested, I will give them the information sheet (see attached) and go through the various sections with them. They will be told, for example, what the project is about and what they will have to do and how long. They will be assured of anonymity and confidentiality and of their rights as participants, such as the right to not answer any particular questions, the right to withdraw from the project, the right to ask for a summary of the results, etc. They will be invited to ask questions to their satisfaction before, during and after their participation.

2.4 Identify the expected outputs of this research (e.g., reports, publications, presentations), including who is likely to see or hear the reports or presentations on this research

First, the main output of this research is a four-paper thesis for the University of Waikato. My supervisor and the examiner will see the thesis. Once the thesis has been passed, it will be available in the department and the library for other researchers to access. Second, it is expected that the research will be written up and presented at an academic conference and/or submitted for publication in an academic journal, in which case other academics and researchers are likely to see it.

2.5 Identify the physical location(s) for the research, the group or community to which your potential participants belong, and any private data or documents you will seek to access. Describe how you have access to the site, participants and data/documents. Identify how you obtain(ed)

permission from relevant authorities/gatekeepers if appropriate and any conditions associated with access.

Data collection will take place at the Ministry of Higher Education and Colleges of Applied Science in the Sultanate of Oman. Participants will be those who work at the ministry and the colleges. I will seek permission to conduct the research by meeting with relevant authorities (such as a representative of the ministry and heads of departments at the colleges). I have access to these locations because I am employed by the ministry, which also gives me a scholarship to study at the University of Waikato, and teach at one of the colleges.

I will not be seeking private data or documents.

3. Obtain participants' informed consent, without coercion.

3.1 Describe how you will select participants (e.g., special criteria or characteristics) and how many will be involved.

I will use a convenience sample. Participants will be selected based on their availability and their willingness to participate. It is expected that 212 participants (with roughly equal number of males and females).

3.2 Describe how you will invite them to participate.

Once I have obtained permission from the ministry and heads of departments, I will approach potential participants face to face in their offices between 10 December 2009 and 30 January 2010 and ask if they would like to participate in the project.

As mentioned earlier, I will explain to prospective participants the purpose, nature, and significance of the study and give them the information sheet to provide more details. I will answer any questions they might have to their satisfaction.

3.3 Show how you provide prospective participants with all information relevant to their decision to participate. Attach your information sheet, cover letter, or introduction script. See document on informed consent for recommended content. Information should include, but is not limited to:

- **what you will ask them to do;**
- **how to refuse to answer any particular question, or withdraw any information they have provided at any time before completion of data collection;**
- **how and when to ask any further questions about the study or get more information.**
- **the form in which the findings will be disseminated and how participants can access a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.**

First of all I will identify myself and who I am as a student in the University of Waikato doing research into attitude towards as women managers and perceptions of and their communication competences. Then I will explain the aim of the study and inform them that I need participants to fill in a questionnaire. At this stage, if they agree to participate I will give them the information sheet to go over together. The information sheet will explain that they will be completing a questionnaire and/or be interviewed, that they do not have to answer any question without having to give any reason, that they can change their mind if they do not want to continue and withdraw any information they have provided before completion of data collection, that they can ask questions at any time for more information, and that they can request a summary of the results at the conclusion of the project. They will be informed that the information they provided will be used only for the purpose of writing a master's thesis and academic papers for a conference or journal.

To ensure that participants understand the information clearly and completely, the information sheet has been translated into Arabic (see attached) and the oral explanation will also be in Arabic.

3.3 Describe how you get their consent. (Attach a consent form if you use one.)

For the questionnaire survey, participation implies consent. For the interview, consent will be obtained by asking participants to sign a consent form, which has been translated into Arabic (see attached).

3.4 Explain incentives and/or compulsion for participants to be involved in this study, including monetary payment, prizes, goods, services, or favours, either directly or indirectly.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. There are no incentives or rewards. I anticipate that those who choose to participate will be motivated by the desire to have a part in helping to develop a body of research that is relevant to the Omani context.

4. Minimise deception.

4.1 If your research involves deception – this includes incomplete information to participants -- explain the rationale. Describe how and when you will provide full information or reveal the complete truth about the research including reasons for the deception.

All relevant information will be provided to participants before they start their participation. There will be no deception.

5. Respect privacy and confidentiality

5.1 Explain how any publications and/or reports will have the participants' consent.

It will be explained from the beginning that the outcome of the research will be a thesis and academic conference/journal papers and that consenting to participate means that participants agree for the information they provide to be used for these purposes, unless they have withdrawn before the data collection process has finished

5.2 Explain how you will protect participants' identities (or why you will not).

Participants will be informed that their names will not be used in any reports or papers and that every attempt will be made to conceal or disguise their identities. Consent forms will be kept separately from interview transcripts.

5.3 Describe who will have access to the information/data collected from participants. Explain how you will protect or secure confidential information.

Data collected will be stored in a secure drawer at my home and only my supervisor and I will have access to them.

6. Minimise risk to participants.

'Risk' includes physical injury, economic injury (i.e. insurability, credibility), social risk (i.e. working relationships), psychological risk, pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, and cultural dissonance and exploitation.

6.1 Where participants risk change from participating in this research compared to their daily lives, identify that risk and explain how your procedures minimize the consequences.

The topic has been widely researched and published in different countries including Muslim countries such as Turkey Egypt, and UAE. I believe there are no risks to participants, either physical, economic or social, or psychological.

6.2 Describe any way you are associated with participants that might influence the ethical appropriateness of you conducting this research – either favourably (e.g., same language or culture) or unfavourably (e.g., dependent relationships such as employer/employee, supervisor/worker, lecturer/student). As appropriate, describe the steps you will take to protect the participants.

I am not associated with participants. However, I am from the same culture as the participants, and because of this, I can understand how to make my research culturally appropriate and sensitive. I will ensure that questions are not offensive by pretesting them with groups of Omani people. I will take steps to ensure that procedures are culturally sensitive. For example, I will not be administering the questionnaire in private—all meetings will take place at the participants' offices, which usually have more than one person. Where female participants are concerned, I will make sure that the office door is open at all times during the meeting, as is the custom in Oman.

6.3 Describe any possible conflicts of interest and explain how you will protect participants' interests and maintain your objectivity.

There are no conflicts of interest. I will protect participants' interests and maintain my objectivity but using the objective scales mentioned earlier.

There will be no scope for me to interfere and inject my subjective views. For the interview, I will use open-ended questions so as to provide the greatest opportunities for participants to talk freely without restriction or coaching from me, the interviewer. Leading questions will not be used.

7. Exercise social and cultural sensitivity.

7.1 Identify any areas in your research that are potentially sensitive, especially from participants' perspectives. Explain what you do to ensure your research procedures are sensitive (unlikely to be insensitive). Demonstrate familiarity with the culture as appropriate.

At the beginning, I was concerned that some questions in the scales may be deemed potentially sensitive for Omani people, even though the scales have been used with a number of Muslim participants in many countries. I have ensured that the questions are not inappropriate by pre-testing them with groups of Omani people and seeking their opinions. I was prepared to adapt the scales to suit the Omani context. As it turned out, the scales were accepted without any problems.

7.2 If the participants as a group differ from the researcher in ways relevant to the research, describe your procedures to ensure the research is culturally safe and non offensive for the participants.

Not applicable

Appendix 7. Research Project Information Sheet

Department of Management
Communication
Waikato Management School
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand
Telephone 64-7-838 4466 Extn. 6281
Facsimile 64-7-838 4358
www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/mcom
Email nittaya@waikato.ac.nz



Research Project Information Sheet

Attitudes towards and Perceptions of Women Managers and Their Communication Competencies in the Sultanate of Oman

Overview

I am studying for a master's degree at the Waikato Management School. As part of my degree programme, I am conducting research to be used as the basis on which to write my master's thesis.

Who's responsible?

My name is Abdullah Al-Mahrouqi. I am an Omani student at the Department of Management Communication, University of Waikato, New Zealand. You can phone me at (00964) 21 212 9255, email me at ahka2@students.waikato.ac.nz or contact me through Dr Nittaya Campbell, my supervisor, at the address on the letterhead.

What's the research study about?

My research study aims to investigate Omani people's attitudes towards women managers and their perceptions of the communication competencies of these managers. The research will explore the relationship between the attitudes and the perceptions as well as the differences due to genders and experience working with/for women managers.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

I will either ask you to complete a questionnaire or interview you. The questionnaire contains two scales: "Attitudes Toward Women as Managers" scale (WAMS) and "Communication Competencies of Women Managers" Scale (CCWMS). The questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. If you are interviewed, you will be asked to talk about your opinions and experience

relating to women in managerial positions. The interview may take about 40-60 minutes.

What will happen to the information collected?

The questionnaires, notes, tapes, and interview transcripts will be kept in a secure place at my home and only my supervisor and I will be privy to these. I will analyse the data collected and use the information to write my four-paper dissertation to be graded by my supervisor and a second assessor. I may also present the research results in the form of a conference paper and/or a journal article. Once the thesis and conference paper and journal article have been written/published, the questionnaires, notes, and interview transcripts will be destroyed and tapes erased.

No participants will be named in research reports unless explicit consent has been given, and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

Appendix 8. Research Project Information Sheet in Arabic

Department of Management Communication

Waikato Management School

The University of Waikato

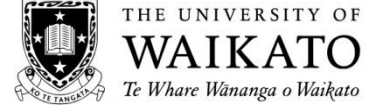
Private Bag 3105

Hamilton, New Zealand

Telephone 64-7-838 4466 Extn. 6281

Facsimile 64-7-838 4358

www.mnqt.waikato.ac.nz/mcom



MCOM594 Thesis Research Project Information Sheet

Attitudes towards and Perceptions of Women Managers and Their Communication Competencies in the Sultanate of Oman

مقدمة:-

يقوم الباحث بهذه الدراسة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير من كلية الإدارة في تخصص إدارة الاتصال بجامعة واكاتو بنيوزلاند. وللحصول على هذه الدرجة العلمية ينبغي على الباحث إعداد دراسة علمية حيث يهدف هذا البحث دراسة الاتجاهات نحو النساء المديرات والتصورات السائدة عن كفاءات الاتصال لديهن.

الباحث:-

اسمي عبدالله بن حمد بن خلفان المحروقي. وأنا أدرس حالياً في قسم إدارة الاتصال بجامعة واكاتو بنيوزلاند. حيث يمكنك الاتصال بالباحث على الرقم 212129255 (00964) أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني ahka2@students.waikato.ac.nz أو التواصل مع الدكتور المشرف على الدراسة الدكتورة Nittaya Campbell على العنوان المرفق بالرسالة.

الهدف من الدراسة:-

الهدف من هذا البحث هو دراسة العلاقة بين الاتجاهات نحو المرأة العمانية كمديرة والتصورات السائدة عن كفاءة الاتصال لديهن. كما تهدف الدراسة معرفة الفروق ذات الدلالة لعاملي الجنس والخبرة العملية لدى النساء المديرات على هذه الاتجاهات.

ما ينبغي عليك القيام به و الوقت يستغرق:-

سوف يطلب من المشاركين في هذه الدراسة الاجابة على استبانة "الاتجاهات نحو النساء المديرات" واستبانة "كفاءة الاتصال لدى النساء المديرات". كلا المقياسين يحتويان على 51 فقرة والتي ستتطلب من المشاركين بين 25-30 دقيقة للاجابة على فقرات الاستبانة. كما سوف يقوم الباحث بمقابلة 12 موظف وموظفة لجمع بعض البيانات للحصول على مزيد من التوضيح والذي سوف يستغرق في حدود 60 دقيقة.

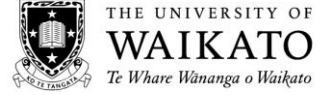
ماذا سيحدث للبيانات التي ستدلي بها؟

سوف تحفظ جميع الاستبانات والملاحظات و الأشرطة والمقابلات المكتوبة في مكان آمن لدى الباحث ولن يطلع عليها سوى الباحث والمشرف على الدراسة. كما سوف يقوم الباحث بتحليل البيانات المجمعّة وسوف يقوم باستخدام المعلومات لكتابة البحث والذي سوف يقيم من قبل المشرف على الدراسة وممتحن من خارج الجامعة. كما أنه من الممكن أن يعرض الباحث نتائج الدراسة في بعض المؤتمرات والمجلات العلمية. كما سوف يتم إتلاف جميع الملاحظات المدونة والمقابلات المكتوبة والأشرطة التسجيلية المستخدمة في الدراسة حفاظاً على سريتها.

كما إنه يحقق للمشاركة في الدراسة ما يلي:

- الامتناع عن إجابة أي سؤال لا يرغب الإجابة عليه كما يحق له الانسحاب من المشاركة في أي وقت يرغب.
- الاستفسار عن أي جزئية غير واضحة في الدراسة أو في أسئلة الاستبانة أو المقابلة.
- الحصول على ملخص لنتائج الدراسة بعد الانتهاء منها.

Appendix 9. Consent Form for Participants



Waikato Management School

Research Title: Attitudes towards and Perceptions of Women Managers and Their Communication Competencies in the Sultanate of Oman

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Information Sheet for Participants** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.

لقد قرأت ما ذكر في ورقة المعلومات الخاصة بالمشاركين في هذا البحث، ولقد تم تعريفي بأهداف البحث والجوانب المتعلقة بمشاركتي في هذا البحث من حيث خصوصية وسرية المشاركة، كما انه تم الاجابة عن جميع التساؤلات التي سألتها بما يوافق رغباتي، كما اني فهمت انه بإمكانني توجيه أي سؤال في أي وقت وكذلك يمكنني الانسحاب من المشاركة في الدراسة في أي وقت، او رفض الاجابة عن أي سؤال.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet**.

انا أوافق لتقديم المعلومات للباحث والمشاركة في هذا البحث , وفقا لما جاء في ورقة البيانات فقط:

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

I agree that while participating in the study my responses and comments may be audiotape recorded for the purposes of the research analysis.

كما أوافق على التسجيل الصوتي لإستجاباتي والملاحظات التي أدلي بها لأغراض البحث العلمي:

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Abdullah Al-Mahrouqi.

Email: ahka2@students.waikato.ac.nz

ID: 1063871, Mobile (964) 0212129255

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Dr Nittaya Campbell

Email: nittaya@waikato.ac.nz

Dept of Management Communication

University of Waikato

Ph: (64 7)856 2889