Future leadership characteristics among the principals of basic education schools

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Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate the degree of availability of the future leadership characteristics among the principals of basic education schools. A questionnaire was used to collect the data from a study sample of (600) school principals. The study results showed that the degree of availability of the future leadership characteristics among the principals of basic education schools was average. The results also showed that there were statistically significant differences related to the academic qualification variable in favour of master's degree and above. There were statistically significant differences related to the variable of the Specialized Center for Professional Training of Teachers in favour of those enrolled in the centre. The study recommended the need to offer programs targeting school principals in dealing with scenarios of future events and issues. The study recommended training of school principals on future planning and future predictions based on the current data.

Keywords: Characteristics, Future Leaders, Basic Education Schools.

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1. Introduction

Educational institutions are facing the increasing demands of a complex and dynamic environment which require them to analyse and interpret their environments and determine their roles in this context and provide a clear and shared vision of how to develop their institutions. Individuals represent the real wealth of nations and societies today more than ever, so the interest in educational institutions is reflected in their ability to prepare a generation of students capable of taking responsibility and facing the challenges of the present and the future (Elsayed et al, 2020).

To this end, many countries, especially developed ones, have exerted valuable efforts to develop their educational systems. Many scientific experiments have been launched in an attempt to define a modern school that is capable of meeting the requirements and burdens of the future. Some have called it the "school of the future". These schools adopt the concept of cooperative learning, the principle of creativity and innovation, the theory of total quality, or the increase in the use of modern technology (Al-Zaboun, 2011).

Sabanci et al. (2013) argues that there is a growing concern that the school principal's role has not evolved to deal with the complex challenges facing schools in preparing students to meet these challenges in the twenty-first century. Therefore, principals should respond to the rapidly changing circumstances since education in the twenty-first century entails a shift from vertical policy-driven change to lateral change and capacity building; therefore, the process of practicing leadership should be adaptable too.

Bennett (2000) mentioned some characteristics that must be present in future leaders, the most important of which are vision and the ability to imagine the impossible which requires passion. There are also other personal qualities such as integrity, social justice, the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, inner strength, courage, effective conflict resolution, and the ability to use the skills of negotiation and persuasion to discuss all issues through. The most important characteristics of future leaders can be summarized through a set of personal qualities, such as: predicting the future, making development plans, visualizing events before they occur, knowledge of the consequences of events and their effects, linking events at different times, formulating strategies, intelligence and innovation, and the ability to analyse the future, insightful future vision, flexibility and the ability to change, broad-mindedness and imagination, contribution to solving societal problems and visualizing related scenarios. They also include leadership qualities such as familiarity with all laws and regulations related to work, principles of human relations and how to apply them, and the ability to make quick decisions in emergencies (Juma, 2018). Kaaki (2002) believed that future leaders have some characteristics. For example, they care about others and their concerns and insist on achieving the goal. They are intelligent and effective negotiators, calm in crises and they accept the challenges. They also focus on the future and its priorities, set the vision, accept and adopt change and feel its importance. Moreover, they attract others to support them, are self-aware of their ability to influence others, treat people fairly, demand too much from employees and do not accept poor standards.

There are four areas in which programs can be implemented to support and assess future leaders. The first is the school's culture and climate which includes values, beliefs, and behaviour patterns which are considered the foundation of the organization. The second area is educational leadership. Leaders who understand the value of educational leadership and the value of its impact on the teaching and learning process are likely to make a difference in the academic performance of students. The third area is the institutional system which reflects the management of resource and operations. The fourth area is talent management (Yavuz & Robinson, 2018).

The current school administration plays an important role in building the future leader because the development of the institution and its growth opportunities are linked to the stability and consistency of the actions and policies of its senior management. In addition to that, the contemporary school leader should be familiar with the leadership needs to ensure the continuity of schools' success. The preparation of future leader is a long process that requires several years. The successful leader is the one who allows their organization to operate successfully (Radwan, 2012).

Those who follow the objectives of the educational policy in the Sultanate of Oman will find that its focus is to improve the quality of education in order to meet the rapid development movement. The education process emphasizes the qualitative development of education in the Sultanate of Oman. Therefore, many educational projects have emerged to keep pace with the requirements of the School of the Future which requires the school principal to make additional efforts. For instance, achieving educational goals with the ability to adopt modern technology (Al-Shandoudia, 2016). In this context, a national framework for future skills was prepared. Ministerial Resolution No. (121/2018) was issued on April 29, 2018, by the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman which specified the formation of a committee to develop the future skills document. This framework was in harmony with what Oman Vision 2040 emphasizes in the human and society dimension (Ministry of Education, 2021a).

Several studies have been conducted in the field of the characteristics of future leaders of school principals in particular and educational institutions in general, including Olmedo's study (2012) which aimed to identify the future skills of school leaders. Olmedo reviewed the relevant literature and used the qualitative approach to achieve the objectives of the study. The study led to several results, the most important of which is the need for leaders to practice future skills and deal with these skills professionally. Similarly, Sabanci et al. (2013) conducted a study which aimed at determining the characteristics of the future school leaders. Sabanci et al. used the qualitative approach and conducted interviews to achieve the objectives of the study. The sample consisted of (56) teachers from different European countries. The study concluded that leaders have limited skills in using the latest technologies adapted to educational needs while motivational strategies were among the most important characteristics of future leaders. This sheds light on the human aspect in educational institutions as well. In addition, the study of Williams and Morey (2015) aimed to identify the school employees' opinions in Australia for their future leadership roles. The descriptive approach was used and a questionnaire was designed to achieve the objectives of the study. The sample consisted of (1173) male and female teachers. The results showed that there is a significant shortage of staff willing to take leadership positions in schools. Furthermore, Al-Shandoudia's study (2016) aimed to determine the necessary competencies for future school principals in the basic education stage in the Sultanate of Oman in the light of some international models. To achieve the objectives of the study, a descriptive approach was used and a questionnaire was designed. The sample consisted of (180) male and female principals. The study found that the degree of school principals' approval of the proposed competencies for future school principals in the basic education stage in the Sultanate of Oman was available to a large degree in all categories specifically encouraging creativity and innovation and providing incentives and an encouraging atmosphere to innovation. The results showed that the category of vocational education was in the first place, followed by evaluation, then planning. Likewise, Mohan's study (2016) aimed to reveal the perceptions of school principals about the future leaders' program in the Republic of Fiji. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers followed the qualitative approach and conducted interviews with a sample consisting of (40) school principals. The study concluded that the future leaders' program has a positive impact on school leaders as it enables them to keep pace with, understand and implement recent changes taking place in the education system.

Seyam (2017) conducted a study that aimed at revealing the effectiveness of the leadership for the future program and its relationship to leading change among UNRWA school principals in the governorates of Gaza. To achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive approach was used and a questionnaire was prepared and applied to (47) male and female principals. The findings of the study indicated that the degree of the effectiveness of the leadership for the future program received a high degree. The results also showed that there were statistically significant differences in the category of communication and performance management due to the qualification variable. Also, there were statistically significant differences in the category of thinking, strategic planning and team leadership in favour of the bachelor's degree holders.

Also, Khamis' study (2018) aimed to review the skills of the twenty-first century as described by the Partnership Framework for Twenty-first Century Skills from the United States of America. The researchers followed the qualitative approach and reviewed the literature to achieve the objectives of the study. The study concluded that there was a need to transfer knowledge about what those skills or competencies were, and to develop perceptions of how to implement them in the Arab and Islamic world. Likewise, Al-Rashidi et al. (2018) conducted a study to identify the scientific ways through which the skills of the future leader can be developed. To achieve the objectives of the study, the qualitative approach was used. The study results showed that there was a need to establish a job or a department specialized in talent management, including the talents of emerging leaders. This department should be under the human resources development department. While Mabd (2019) conducted a study which aimed at recognizing the effectiveness of a developed historical unit in light of the dimensions of future education to develop future foresight skills. The study followed a quasi-experimental approach. Students were divided into two groups: a control group consisting of (34) students, and an experimental group consisting of (34) students. A pretest and posttest were also conducted. The study found that the means of the experimental group increased in future foresight skills. The differences were in favour of the posttest that was taught using units that dealt with awareness of societal issues, future perception, creativity, and imagination.

Elsayed et al. (2020) conducted a study that aimed to identify the role of educational institutions in preparing future leaders from the viewpoint of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman. The descriptive-analytical approach was used. To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was prepared and applied to (100) school principals in the Governorate of Dhofar. The study concluded that educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman play a moderate role in preparing future leaders in general. In addition, Al-Amiri (2020) conducted a study that aimed at identifying the competencies of foreseeing the future among academic leaders, and their relationship to their role in activating the strategic directions of King Abdulaziz University. The descriptive correlational approach was used. A questionnaire was applied to a sample of (328) faculty members. The competency of foreseeing the future by the academic leaders and their role in activating the strategic directions of King Abdulaziz University received a medium degree in the overall degree and in all categories. Also, the relationship between the competencies of foreseeing the future and activating the academic leaders of the strategic directions was very high. As well, Al-Khodari (2021) conducted a study which aimed at identifying the requirements for developing future skills in Saudi universities through the three functions of the university. The explanatory qualitative approach was used and to achieve the objectives of the study, a structured interview was conducted. The sample consisted of (15) experts representing Saudi universities. The study indicated the need to support faculty researchers and encourage them to conduct future research on skills and their development.

Adamsand Velarde, (2021) identified the leadership styles of foreign school leaders in Malaysia's culturally varied setting. They used a qualitative technique to find opinions on cultural diversity, including interviews with four school leaders, observation field notes, and documentary analysis from three foreign schools. The contextualization of instructional and transformational leadership traits in international school leadership was achieved through qualitative data analysis. School leaders' opinions outlined techniques for developing a shared mission and vision through the school's core values, curriculum, and co-curricular activities, while fostering harmonious interaction among members of the international school community.

Karakose et al.(2021) looked at teachers' perceptions and experiences with their school principals' digital leadership responsibilities and technology skills during the COVID-19 epidemic. The study group consisted of 89 Master's degree-holding instructors and was done utilizing a case study-based qualitative technique. "Digital technology usage, support for the digital transformation, support for technology-based professional development, support for digital learning culture, and digital leadership abilities" are the five primary themes selected based on the opinions and experiences of the participants. The study's findings suggested that instructors thought school administrators' use of digital technology during the COVID-19 epidemic was appropriate. School principals were found to be supportive of digital transformation and technology-based professional development in schools. Furthermore, it was discovered within the scope of the study that school leaders contribute to the development of a digital learning culture in schools. According to the study's findings, school administrators' digital leadership abilities fall into three categories: technology use, management skills, and individual talents.

In response to what was previously mentioned from the previous studies, the similarities, differences, and benefits were presented. The similarities are represented in the agreement of the current study with previous studies in the use of the descriptive method as a research design except for Olmedo's (2012), Sabanci et al. (2013), Sabanci et al., Al-Rashidi et al. (2018) and Khamis (2018) which followed the qualitative approach. However, Al-Khodari (2021) used the qualitative explanatory approach. The current study also used the questionnaire as a tool for the study. It is the tool used by most of the previous descriptive studies, but some of them relied on the review of theoretical literature, such as Olmedo (2012) and Khamis (2018). However, the interviews were a study tool of Sabanci et al. (2013). The current study is similar to previous studies in dealing with the issue of future skills that leaders need. The current study is similar to some previous studies in its handling of the study sample, which is school principals, except for the Al-Khodari's study (2021), which dealt with experts and Al-Amiri's study (2020) which dealt with faculty members.

As for the differences, the current study differed in its treatment of the availability of the characteristics of future leaders among the principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman. It associated the characteristics of future leaders to school principals from the teachers' point of view, while most studies linked one of the variables with other variables. The current study differed from previous studies in the time and place boundaries.

Hence, this study came to reveal the availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman.

Problem Statement

Preparing and developing educational leaders is very important as school principals play an active role in setting the right direction for successful schools by qualifying their members for the skills of the twenty-first century. Schools that show high performance in students' academic achievement depend

primarily on effective leadership which builds a positive environment and lead the organization system, which can only achieve success by developing and preparing highly qualified educational leaders (Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Pannell et al. 2016; Yavuz & Robinson 2018).

In the school of the future, the school principal must play many roles including their planning and supervision role, their role as a decision maker, as a center for information and communication, as a catalyst for schoolwork, and their role in developing human relations and linking the school with the local environment (Al-Harbi, 2006). The Omani schools mission is part of the philosophy of the Ministry of Education. The philosophy aims to achieve a paradigm shift for education in the Sultanate of Oman. It also aims to prepare generations capable of managing the development of society, facing the challenges of the future and meeting its requirements. Hence, the role of the school principal as a leader striving for excellence and creativity in the school of the future.

2. Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1.   What is the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman from the point of view of school principals?

2.   Are there statistically significant differences in the school principals' estimates of the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman according to study variables (academic qualification, enrolment in the specialized centre)?

3. Research Objectives

1.   To identify the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman from the point of view of school principals?

2.   To discover if there are statistically significant differences in the school principals' estimates of the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman according to study variables (academic qualification, enrollment in the specialized centre)?

4. Significance of the Study

The importance of the study is as follows:

1. Enriching the theoretical aspect related to the characteristics of future leaders that are available in school principals and which are noticed by faculty members as they are more in contact with school principals. The current study is considered an extension of the Arab studies that dealt with future leadership and the characteristics of leaders.

2. The study also presents a questionnaire that has psychometric characteristics, and it measures the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman from the point of view of the study sample. Researchers can benefit from the instrument in their future studies.

3. Those interested, decision-makers and stakeholders can use the results of the study to participate in improving the administrative performance in schools in line with the aspirations of the future leadership.

5. Definition of Terms

- Characteristics: Yukl (1992, p.135) defines them as: "a variety of individual characteristics, including aspects of personality, mood, needs, motives, and values."

  In this study, it is procedurally known as the degree of availability of the distinctive qualities of future leaders among the principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman, such as: creativity and imagination, digital knowledge, initiative to work, leadership skills, and personality features.

- Leaders: Morgan (2020, p. 24) defines them as: "People who have the ability to see something better than it is now, who are able to direct people to move toward that better vision, come up with a plan to put that vision in place, and make that vision happens in reality."

- Leaders are defined procedurally in this study as: people who are characterized by high levels of creativity, excellence and experience, and they are expressed in this study as principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman.

- Future leadership: The researchers define it as a leadership style based on foreseeing the future by developing a set of necessary skills for principals and motivating them to achieve excellence and creativity of the school, which is expressed in this study to the degree obtained by the questionnaire items prepared by the researchers.

6. The limitations of the study

The limits of the study are as follows:

- Human limits: The study was conducted on all public-school principals in all educational governorates in the Sultanate of Oman.

- Time limits: The study was applied in the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year.

- Context limits: The study was applied in all government schools with basic and post-basic education in all educational governorates in the Sultanate of Oman.

- Determinant of the study tool: The results of the study depended on the validity and reliability of the tool used which was prepared by the researchers.

7. Methodology

Research Design: The researchers used the descriptive approach design due to its relevance to the nature and objectives of the study. It aims to determine the status of the phenomenon under study, then work on describing it (Al-Bayati, 2018).

Population: The study population consisted of all school principals in the educational governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. Total number was (1,200) (Ministry of Education, 2021b).

Sample: The study sample consisted of (600) male and female principals in the educational governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. The sample was chosen by the simple random method. Table (1) shows the distribution of the study sample members according to the study variables.

Table 1. *Distribution of Study Sample Members according to Study Variables.*

Variable	Qualification Level	Frequency	Percentage
Academic	Masters or above	88	14.7
Qualification	Bachelors or less	512	85.3

	Total	600	100.0
Enrollment in	Yes	265	44.2
Specialized center	No	335	55.8
	Total	600	100.0

Study tool: To achieve the objectives of the study and answer its questions, the researchers built a questionnaire to measure the degree to which the characteristics of future leaders are available to principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman. after reviewing the literature such as the study of Al-Rashidi et al. (2018) and the study of Al-Amiri (2020), and reviewing the publications issued by the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman, and the future skills document, the researchers prepared the study tool which consisted of (28) items in its initial form.

8. Validity

Face validity: To verify the face validity of the study tool, the questionnaire was presented in its initial form to (7) reviewers specialized in educational administration, measurement and evaluation, and Arabic language to express their observations about the suitability of the items to the categories in which they were included, delete or add any of the items. All the referees' feedback and comments were considered. Therefore, the study tool consisted of (25) items in its final form; distributed on the categories of characteristics of future development (5 items), characteristics of work initiative which has (5) items, characteristics of creativity and imagination (5 items), the characteristics of understanding societal issues (5 items) and the future prediction characteristics (5 items). A five Likert-scale has been adopted: very large, large, medium, little, and very little.

Internal consistency: The validity of the construction was achieved by distributing the questionnaire to a pilot sample of (45) members of the population. The pilot sample was excluded from the sample of the current study. The correlation of the tool was calculated. The overall correlation coefficients of the items of the questionnaire ranged between (0.241) and (0.751), while the correlation coefficients of the categories ranged between (0.259) and)0.797). Table 2 illustrates this.

Table 2. *Correlation Coefficient of the Tool*

	Characteristics of future development			Characteristics of work initiative			Characteristics of Creativity and imagination	
	Correlation coefficient			Correlation coefficient			Correlation coefficient	
No.	Category	verall tool	No.	Category	Overall tool	No.	Category	Overall tool
1	0.771**	0.722**	6	0.582**	0.399*	11	0.363*	0.326*
2	0.740**	0.730**	7	0.702**	0.660**	12	0.630**	0.612**
3	0.748**	0.683**	8	0.785**	0.756**	13	0.641**	0.482*
4	0.770**	0.590**	9	0.585**	0.344*	14	0.707**	0.567**
5	0.259	0.241	10	0.499*	0.393*	15	0.746**	0.655**

It can be noted that all correlation coefficients were of acceptable and statistically significant degrees. Therefore, none of these items were omitted. The overall category correlation coefficient and the correlation coefficients between the categories were also extracted as shown in Table (3).

Table 3. *Correlation Coefficients between the Sub-categories of the Tool*

Characteristics	Future development	Work initiative	Creativity and imagination	Understanding societal issues	Future prediction
Future development	1				
Work initiative	0.562**	1			
Creativity and imagination	0.573**	0.555**	1		
Understanding societal issues	**0.595	0.574**	0.624**	1	
Prediction	**0.651	**0.591	**0.613	**0.645	

* Sig. (α≤0.05). ** Sig. (α≤0.01).

It appears from Table (3) that the correlation coefficients between the sub-categories in the study tool with each other ranged between (0.555-0.651) which are statistically significant values.

Reliability: To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the Cronbach Alpha equation was applied to all items of the study tool categories as shown in Table (4).

Table 4. *Reliability Coefficients by (Cronbach's alpha) Method for the Study Categories*

Category	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Characteristics of future development	5	0.74
Characteristics of work initiative	5	0.89
Characteristics of Creativity and imagination	5	0.78
Characteristics of understanding societal issues	5	0.88
Characteristics of future prediction	5	0.76
Overall	25	0.91

Table (4) shows the reliability coefficients by Cronbach's alpha method for the study tool. It ranged between (0.74) and (0.89) which are high values and are acceptable for purposes of this study.

9. Study Procedures

After selecting the topic, the researchers began to review the literature and previous studies related to the topic. The problem statement was formulated, the research outline was written, and the study tool was built, formulated, and presented for reviewers. After that, the tool was formulated in its final form. Then, the questionnaire was applied to the target sample, which led to the data collection and data was analyzed via SPSS program. Finally, results were discussed, and recommendations were stated by the researchers

Data Analysis

The researchers followed these steps:

- The Alpha Cronbach equation was measured to determine the internal consistency reliability coefficient.

- The internal consistency validity was also measured using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

- After collecting the data, it was statistically processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program.

- The means and standard deviations were calculated.

- Independent Samples T-Test on the categories of study was conducted.

- Standard Correction of the Instrument

The ratio scale statistical model is adopted in order to make judgments on the mean scores as follows: (low 1.00-2.23, medium, 2.34-3.6, high 3.68-5) which was determined by calculating the length of each criterion interval after adopting the number of desired judgments. The upper point of scale (5) is subtracted from the lower point of scale (1), divided by the number of required intervals (3), then the interval length is first added to the lower scale of the triple Likert Scale, and so on with the rest of the intervals.

10. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to identify the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman. The following is a presentation of the results of the study.

Research Question 1: What is the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman from the point of view of school principals?

The means and standard deviations of the answers of the study sample members were extracted from the categories of the study tool. Tables (5-10) illustrate this.

Table 5. *Means and Standard Deviations the Study Categories.*

Rank	No.	Category	Mean	standard deviation	Degree
1	4	Characteristics of understanding societal issues	3.34	0.87	Medium
2	2	Characteristics of work initiative	3.30	0.96	Medium
3	3	Characteristics of Creativity and imagination	3.27	0.81	Medium
4	5	Characteristics of future prediction	3.13	0.91	Medium
5	1	Characteristics of future development	3.10	0.74	Medium
Overall			3.23	0.65	Medium

It appears from Table (5) that the means of the responses of the sample members about the categories of study ranged between (3.10) and (3.34) with the degree of medium availability for all items, where the category of "Characteristics of understanding societal issues" was in the first place with a mean score of (3.34). In the second place, the category of "Characteristics of work initiative" with a mean score of (3.30). The category of "characteristics of creativity and imagination" ranked the third place with a mean score of (3.27) and in the fourth place was the category of "Characteristics of future prediction" with a mean of (3.13), The category of "Characteristics of future development" was the last with a mean score of (3.10). The overall mean score of the study tool was (3.23) with a medium degree of availability.

It is noted from the results that the availability degree of the characteristics of future leaders among school principals was available to a medium degree in the overall degree and in all categories. This may be due to the presence of practices that did not keep pace with the requirements of future leadership. It also may be due to the lack of programs and activities targeting principals and related to recent developments. It could be also because of job burdens that prevent them from being knowledgeable.

The result of this study agreed with the study of Elsayed et al. (2020), which found that the role of educational institutions in preparing future leaders was available to a medium degree. However, the result of the study differed from Al-Shandoudia's study (2016), which concluded that the degree of school principals' approval was large for the competencies needed for future school principals. It also differed from the results of Seyam's study (2017).

The researchers note from the results of the study that the category of "understanding societal issues" was in the first place, with a "medium" degree of availability. This may be because this category deals with the tasks and duties of the principal more clearly and has an impact on school life surrounding environment that is connected to the school. This feature is characterized by features of the future. It develops and it is affected by the administrative and technological innovations surrounding the school which are affected by the society. Therefore, officials should give school principals more programs that relate to the characteristics and skills of understanding societal issues among school leaders due to the fact that school leadership has a significant impact on the stability of society. This result differs with the Al-Shandoudia's study (2016) in which the category of community partnership was available to a large degree.

The category of "Characteristics of work initiative" was in the second place with a medium degree of availability. This may be due to the fact that most of the principals have annual and semester school plans in which they do all work, but some may be lenient in adhering to these plans in the required form due to emergency circumstances or lack of high importance.

It is also noted that the category of "characteristics of creativity and imagination" was in the third place with a medium degree of availability. This may be due to the fact that some school principals give this aspect attention, but they may lack the material capabilities and human expertise in how to employ their abilities, skills and creativity, which appear through their employment in daily situations. Therefore, supervisors and those responsible for innovation and creativity should provide workshops for school principals on how school principals deal with creative solutions outside the box.

The category of "Characteristics of future prediction" ranked fourth with a medium degree of availability. This may be due to the fact that some school principals do not care about the effects of some societal problems and do not pay attention to them as much as they are interested in solving the problem in a timely manner. Some school principals avoid exploring societal issues under the guise of non-interference, or fear of misunderstanding by some members of the society.

Finally, the category of "Characteristics of future development" came in the last rank with a medium degree of availability. This may be due to the fact that some school principals do not give importance to the future as much as they give importance to the present. Without noticing that some events may repeat their scenarios in the future and thus can be benefited from.

The mean scores and standard deviations of the estimates of the study sample were calculated on the items of each category separately in the next section

Category 1: Characteristics of future development

Table 6. *Means and Standard Deviations of the "Characteristics of future prediction" Category, Arranged in Descending Order According to the Mean.*

Rank	No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	5	I choose the best appropriate scenarios to solve the issue at hand.	3.65	1.06	Medium
2	3	I define the implications of each scenario used in resolving future issues.	3.58	1.05	Medium
3	4	I organize the scenarios according to their importance in solving the societal issue in the future.	3.54	1.04	Medium
4	2	I always present alternative scenarios to solve an issue in the school's surroundings.	2.54	1.12	Medium
5	1	I analyze some scenarios to solve the issues of the surrounding community of the school.	2.19	0.97	Low
Overall			3.10	0.74	Medium

It appears from Table (6) that the mean scores of the responses of the study sample members on the category of "Characteristics of future development" ranged between (2.19) and (3.65). The highest was item (5) "I choose the best appropriate scenarios to solve the issue at hand." with a medium degree of availability, while the lowest was item (1) "I analyze some scenarios to solve the issues of the surrounding community of the school." with a low degree of availability. The overall mean of the category was (3.10) which represents a medium degree of availability.

Item (5) was in the first place may be attributed to the fact that some school principals possess the scientific knowledge in the differentiation between the options offered by undergoing some training programs or by joining the Specialized Center. It gives the enrolled members doses of leadership methods including the skills of dealing with scenarios related to future events and issues.

The researchers note from the results that item (1) ranked last and with a low degree of availability. This may be due to the fact that many school principals do not possess the skills of scientific analysis of issues, do not knowledge of societal issues or consider them less important in the educational process. This is the result differed of Seyam's study (2017) which concluded that the ability of principals to analyze community issues came to a large degree.

Category 2: Characteristics of work initiative

Table 7. *Means and Standard Deviations of the "Characteristics of work initiative" Category, Arranged in Descending Order According to the Mean.*

Rank	No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree

1	1	I motivate teachers to follow regulations and instructions in order to achieve high performance results in the future.	3.57	1.15	Medium
2	3	I set high performance levels for schoolwork.	3.37	1.08	Medium
3	5	I make future plans to achieve educational goals.	3.32	1.19	Medium
4	2	I explain work directions and future attitudes to teachers and students.	3.18	1.13	Medium
5	4	I put the required future work in a time plan.	3.06	1.26	Medium
	Overall		3.30	0.96	Medium

It appears from Table (7) that the arithmetic averages of the responses of the study sample members to the field of "Characteristics of work initiative" ranged between (3.06) and (3.57) with a medium degree of availability for all items. Item (1) "I motivate teachers to follow regulations and instructions in order to achieve high performance results in the future." was the highest, while item (4) "I put the required future work in a time plan." was the lowest. The overall mean was (3.30) with a medium degree of availability.

Item (1) was in the first place with a medium degree of availability. This may be attributed to the interest of some school principals and their quest to achieve high results, whether in competitions, activities or academic achievement. Therefore, you find them making efforts to motivate and guide teachers to achieve this end. This result agreed with the study of Al-Amiri (2020) which concluded that the ability to determine duties and actions was available to a medium degree. It differed from the studies of Seyam (2017) and Al-Shandoudia (2016) which had a large degree with regard to teacher's motivation.

The researchers note from the results that item (4) came in the last rank with a medium degree of availability. This may be attributed to the fact that some school principals give importance to daily or quarterly plans as they plan their daily work without looking at the future and the required programs and skills. This is apparent in professional development programs which deal with immediate issues. The result of this study differed from the study of Seyam's results (2017) which stated planning for tasks and duties was available to a large degree.

Category 3: Characteristics of work initiative

Table 8. *Means and Standard Deviations of the "Characteristics of Creativity and Imagination" Category, Arranged in Descending Order According to the Mean.*

Rank	No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	3	I have the ability to develop the innovation provided by the teachers.	3.49	1.02	Medium
2	4	I encourage creativity among teachers and students.	3.35	1.09	Medium
3	5	I have the ability to imagine and present new ideas.	3.34	1.16	Medium

Rank	No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
4	1	I raise questions about the innovations presented.	3.15	1.15	Medium
4	2	I seek to identify innovative solutions.	3.04	1.15	Medium
	Overall		3.27	0.81	Medium

It appears from Table (8) that the means of the category of "Characteristics of creativity and imagination" ranged between (3.04) and (3.49) with a medium degree of availability for all items. Item (3) "I have the ability to develop the innovation provided by the teachers." received the highest mean, while item (2) "I seek to identify innovative solutions." received the lowest mean. The overall mean score was (3.27) with a medium degree of availability.

Item (3) was in the first place with a medium degree of availability. This may be attributed to the fact that some school principals do not only encourage teachers and students to present innovations, but rather work on their development and modifications in order to benefit from them. This result differed from the results of Al-Amiri (2020), Seyam (2017), and Al-Shandoudia (2016) which showed a large degree in both encouraging creativity and innovation, and providing incentives and productive environment to innovation.

The researchers note from the results that item (2) came in the last rank with an average degree of availability. This may be due to the large number of burdens placed on school principals which limits their ability to search for innovative solutions. Also, some of them prefer ready-made and cost-effective which have been previously tested. This result agreed with the studies of Al-Amiri (2020) and Al-Shandoudia (2016) which was available to a medium degree with regard to offering innovative solutions using a method that reflects the future dimension. However, the results differed from Seyam's study (2017) which found that the ability of principals to find creative solutions came to a large degree.

Category 4: Characteristics of understanding societal issues

Table 9. *Means and Standard Deviations of the "Characteristics of understanding societal issues" Category, Arranged in Descending Order According to the Mean.*

Rank	No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	2	I have the ability to identify societal issues that affect the school.	3.53	1.04	Medium
2	1	I can collect information related to the societal issue.	3.46	1.08	Medium
3	4	I am interested in knowing the causes of the emergence of societal issues and current events.	3.42	1.02	Medium
4	3	I have the ability to relate societal issues to current events.	3.21	1.04	Medium
5	5	I have the ability to identify local and global efforts to address societal issues.	3.09	1.10	Medium
	Overall		3.34	0.87	Medium

It appears from Table (9) that the means of the category of "Characteristics of understanding societal issues" ranged between (3.09) and (3.53) with a medium degree of availability for all items. Item (2) "I have the ability to identify societal issues that affect the school." received the highest mean, while item

(5) "I have the ability to identify local and global efforts to address societal issues." received the lowest mean. The overall mean was (3.34) with a medium degree of availability.

Item (2) was ranked in the first place with a medium degree of availability. This may be attributed to the fact that some school principals are in contact with the society as they participate in many committees related to the local community. In addition to that, they participate in committees at the level of education directorates in the governorates. Thus. they are familiar with the influential issues. This result agreed with the study of Al-Amiri (2020) which showed the ability to face social external changes received a medium degree. This result differed from the Mabd's study (2019) in which awareness of societal issues was available with a large degree.

The researchers note from the results that item (5) ranked the last with a medium degree of availability. This may be due to the fact that some efforts are not disclosed for reasons deemed by the competent authorities. Also, it may be attributed to the large number of burdens placed on school principals which makes it difficult for them to follow the news and media or search for local and international efforts. This result differed from the studies of Mabd (2019), Seyam (2017), and Al-Shandoudia (2017) which showed a large degree of availability in terms of identifying local and international efforts, employing them and forming social teams.

Category 5: Characteristics of future development

Table 10. *Means and Standard Deviations of the "Characteristics of future development" Category, Arranged in Descending Order According to the Mean.*

Rank	No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	2	I infer the effects of the expected events on the school.	3.42	1.09	Medium
2	1	I organize the expected events in a logical sequence.	3.20	1.11	Medium
3	4	I organize the results and negative effects of the issues according to their impact on the school.	3.09	1.20	Medium
4	5	I expect the largest number of reasons for the continuance of societal issues in the future.	2.99	1.46	Medium
5	3	I anticipate some suggestions to reduce negative consequences.	2.96	1.46	Medium
	Overall		3.13	0.91	Medium

It appears from Table (10) that the mean of "Characteristics of future development" ranged between (2.96) and (3.42) with a medium degree of availability for all items. Item (2) "I infer the effects of the expected events on the school." received the highest mean, while item (3) "I anticipate some suggestions to reduce negative consequences." received the lowest mean. The overall mean was (3.13) with a medium degree of availability.

Item (2) was ranked in the first place with a medium degree of availability. This may be attributed to the interest of some school principals in the effects of events and their desire to benefit from these

effects to avoid them in the future, to build solutions and to develop plans to face these effects. This result differed from the Al-Shandoudia study (2016) which found that societal issues were largely used.

The researchers note from the results that item (3) was ranked the last place with a medium degree of availability. This may be due to the lack of knowledge and the lack of interest by some school principals in developing proposals to avoid negative effects in the school.

Research Question 2: Are there statistically significant differences in the school principals' estimates of the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman according to study variables (academic qualification, enrollment in the specialized center)?

This question was answered by applying the Independent Samples T-Test according to the variables (academic qualification, enrollment in the specialized center). The results are presented below:

Variable: Academic qualification

Table 11. *Results of Applying the Independent Samples T-Test according to the Academic Qualification Variable.*

Category	Academic Qualification	Mean	Standard deviation	t	f	Sig.
Characteristics of future development	Masters or above	3.432	0.775	4.686	598	0.000
	Bachelors or less	3.040	0.715			
Characteristics of work initiative	Masters or above	3.657	0.942	3.806	598	0.000
	Bachelors or less	3.238	0.956			
Characteristics of Creativity and imagination	Masters or above	3.591	0.723	4.039	598	0.000
	Bachelors or less	3.218	0.812			
Characteristics of understanding societal issues	Masters or above	3.725	0.701	4.576	598	0.000
	Bachelors or less	3.273	0.879			
Characteristics of future prediction	Masters or above	3.436	0.743	3.447	598	0.001
	Bachelors or less	3.078	0.926			
Overall	Masters or above	3.568	0.516	5.460	598	0.000
	Bachelors or less	3.170	0.650			

Table (11) shows that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level (α≤0.05) between the school principals' estimates of the degree of availability of the characteristics of future

leaders among the principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman according to the academic qualification. (t) values were Statistically significant. The mean scores showed that the differences were in favour of the academic qualification (Masters and above) which means that the study sample members who obtained master's degree and above have the attributes of future leaders more than others. This may be attributed to the courses they studied at the master's level, where master's holders gain the ability to guess, analyse, interpret and link information and events. These results differed from the result of Seyam's study (2017) which indicated that there were differences in favour of the bachelor's degree. Also, it differed from Al- Shandoudia's study (2016) which indicated that there were no differences attributed to academic qualification.

Variable: Enrolment in Specialized Centre

Table 12. *Results of Applying the Independent Samples T-Test according to the Enrollment in Specialized Center Variable.*

Category	Enrollment in Specialized Center	Mean	Standard deviation	t	f	Sig.
Characteristics of future development	Yes	3.39	0.64	9.083	598	0.000
	No	2.87	0.73			
Characteristics of work initiative	Yes	4.06	0.57	23.559	598	0.000
	No	2.71	0.78			
Characteristics of Creativity and imagination	Yes	3.90	0.46	22.600	598	0.000
	No	2.79	0.68			
Characteristics of understanding societal issues	Yes	4.00	0.51	22.042	598	0.000
	No	2.83	0.74			
Characteristics of future prediction	Yes	3.66	0.77	14.483	598	0.000
	No	2.73	0.80			
Overall	Yes	3.80	0.31	30.313	598	0.000
	No	2.79	0.47			

Table (12) shows that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level (α≤0.05) between the school principals' estimates of the degree of availability of the characteristics of future leaders among the principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman according to the variable of enrolment in the specialized centre. (t) values were statistically significant. The mean scores showed that the differences were in favour of those enrolled in the specialized centre, which means that the study sample members who joined the specialized centre possessed the attributes of future leaders more than others. This may be attributed to the nature of the modern programs that are offered and addressed at the specialized centre in order to keep pace with technological innovations and scientific developments. Also, many of the programs offered by the centre depend on preparing school principals for future leadership.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to determine the availability of future leadership characteristics among principals of schools in the Sultanate of Oman. According to the study findings, the availability of future leadership characteristics among principals of basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman was average. The findings also revealed statistically significant differences in the academic qualification variable in favour

of master's degrees and above. There were also statistically significant differences in favour of those enrolled in the Specialized Centre for Professional Training of Teachers.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers recommend the following:

- Implementation of programs by the specialized centre to train school principals in dealing with scenarios of events and future issues that affect the society and affect the school.

- The development department in the educational governorates should train school principals on future planning and future predictions according to the current data.

- Directing those concerned with administrative supervision to urge school principals to follow up on local and international events, and to benefit from them in professional development programs.

- The necessity for school principals to develop innovative solutions to solve school issues and events and link them to societal issues in general.

12. Suggestions

The researchers suggest conducting new research studies dealing with:

- The characteristics of the future school from the point of view of school principals.

- The necessary skills for the school principal of the future from the point of view of the administrative supervisors.

13. Acknowledgement

14. References

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