CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the current state of leadership practices in implementing a quality management system for administrative affairs at Omani private HEIs. The literature review pointed to seven principles that researchers on the subject of quality management system in higher education agree are significant in academic settings for TQM implementation to be successful. These principles are: (1) Senior Leadership, (2) Strategic Planning, (3) Training Programs, (4) Empowerment & Involvement, (5) Reward & Motivation, (6) Teamwork, and (7) Continuous Improvement. Of these seven areas, all those related to leadership practices will be examined in this chapter. Following the methodological approach outlined for this study in the previous chapter, chapter IV presents and analyzes the data gathered from both the self-administrated questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this chapter is to transform the collected data from numbers, codes, and short written responses to more understandable and usable data. The second purpose of the chapter is to discuss the findings. The discussion is based on information from the questionnaires, as well as interviews, and is supported with evidence from the literature.

This chapter is organized in accordance with the questions of the study. Consequently, chapter IV is divided into five main sections, and each section is divided into subsections. The chapter begins by describing data collection (4.2). In Section 4.3 the demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized. Finally, section 4.4 deals with the four questions of the study. In order to answer the research questions in connection with quality management practices of leadership in-depth, this section has been divided into four subsections. For instance, the first subsection represents the findings in relation to question number one what is the overall state of leadership practices in implementing a quality management system in administrative affairs at Omani private HEIs?; the second concerns determining the areas of strength and weakness in current leadership practices at Omani private HEIs; the third relates to evaluating the differences in leadership practices based on

and thus highlight the importance of selecting and preparing qualified educational leadership.

3. The study may be useful for academic and administration leadership for indentifying and highlighting the most important areas of strength and weakness in quality management at these institutions presently.
4. Finally, the importance of this study lies in deepening the understanding and encouraging further research on leadership best practices for sustaining improvements in quality at HEIs in the Sultanate of Oman.

1.7 Definition of Terms

For this study, these terms are used repeatedly. They are defined based on the context of the study. These terms may be further examined and explained in-depth throughout this study.

Higher Education: Higher education includes all type of studies, training for research at the post secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities (UNESCO, 1998).

Leadership: Refers to *"the process of leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of an organized group toward the accomplishment of group goals. As a property, leadership is a set of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to successfully employ such influence"* (Stogdill, 1974, p.7).

Private Higher Education Institutions: Comprises of universities, colleges and specialist institutions that are not operated by governments. However, private higher education institutions may be subject to government regulation (The European Education Directory, 13 May 2013).

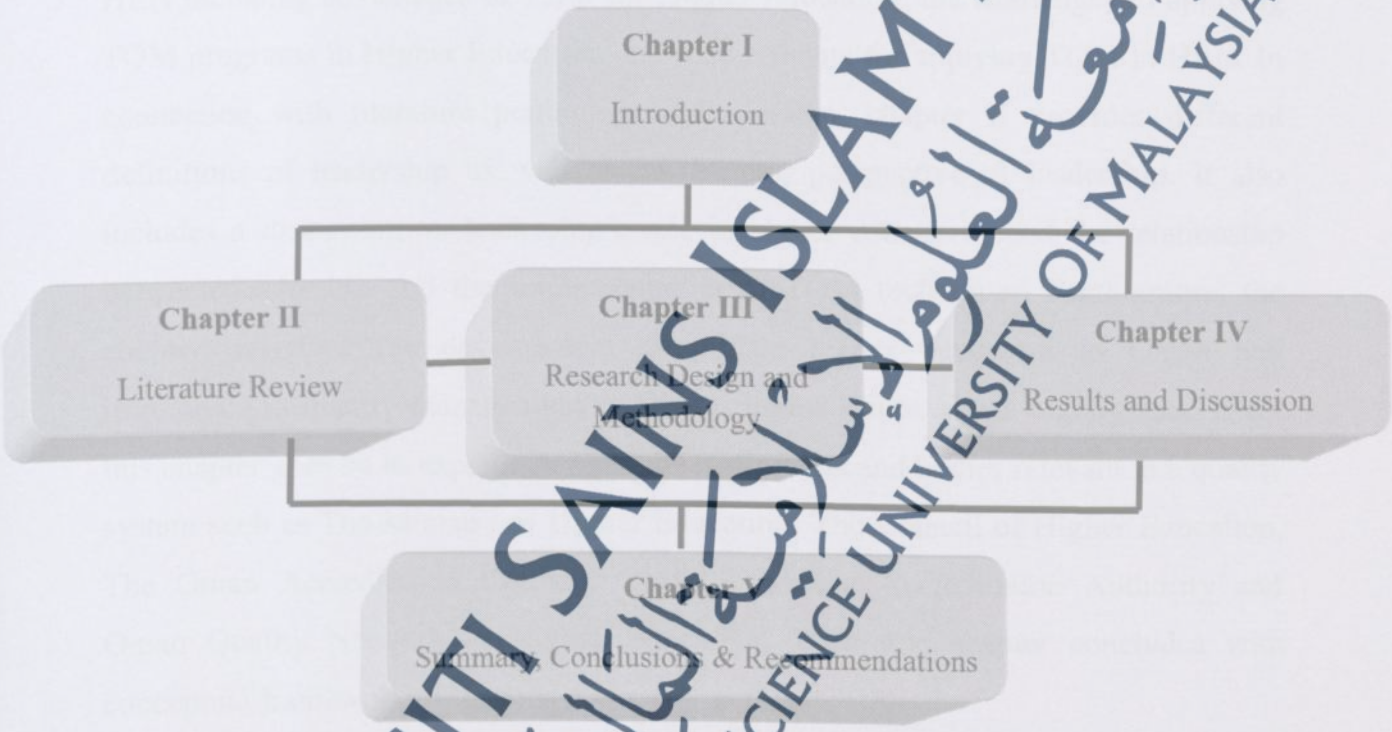
Quality in Higher Education: UNESCO defines quality in higher education as a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, infrastructure and the academic environment (UNESCO, 13 May 2013).

Total Quality Management (TQM): Refers to an approach to quality management based on continuous improvement, and active involvement of everyone within an organization in the improvement process (Forrst, 1996).

1.8 The Structure of the Study

This study basically consists of five chapters which include tasks to achieve the objectives of the study and address the research questions. The structure of the study is set out as follows:

FIGURE 1.1: The Structure of the Study



Chapter I (Introduction)

Chapter I is an introduction to the study, it covers the background of the study, a statement of the problem, and the objectives of the study. The chapter will also present the study questions, significance of the study, definition of terms and finally the structure of the study.

supported the research findings widely applicable to private higher education in Oman. As has been mentioned in previous chapter, during findings discussion in order to protect participants' privacy, will be refer to them as interviewee 1, 2,3 etc.

4.3 Respondents Demographics

This section provides data of a general descriptive nature about the respondents. All 468 respondents from each of the 19 private colleges and universities answered the first section of the questionnaire requesting their demographic information. This information, for all administrators and faculty members participating in this study, is reported in table 4.2- 4.7. The variables included gender, nationality, age, education level, job classification, and work experience in HEIs. In order to answer demographic questions statistical analysis using frequencies and percentages were used.

4.3.1 Gender

Out of 468 respondents, 245, or 52.3% were male, whereas 47.6% were female. The frequency distribution of respondents by gender is presented in table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2: Respondents Gender

Gender	Percent	Frequency
1. Male	52.4%	245
2. Female	47.6%	223
Total	*100.0*	468

4.3.2 Nationality

Nationality is another question that was asked of survey respondents. The data illustrate that 192 (41%) of the participants were Omani, while 276 (59%) were Non-Omani.

TABLE 4.3:Respondents Nationality

Nationality	Percent	Frequency
1. Omani	41.0%	192
2. Non-Omani	59.0%	276
Total	*100.0*	468

4.3.3 Age

Additionally, participants were asked to supply their approximate age by selecting from five age categories. 23.1% of the participants were under 30 years of age, but the majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 39 years old, and only 2.8% of the respondents were aged over 59 years old. Nearly 23% were aged between 40 to 49 years old, and 6.4% were in the age range 50 to 59 years. These age statistics are presented in table 4.4.

TABLE 4.4: Respondents Age

Age (years)	Percent	Frequency
1.Under 30	23.1%	108
2.31-39	44.9%	210
3.40-49	22.9%	107
4.50-59	6.4%	30
5.60 or over	2.8%	13
Total	*100.0*	468

4.3.4 Educational Qualifications

The respondents' qualifications ranged from having secondary school or less to having a doctoral degree. Close to half of the respondents (45.1%) had a master's degree, with the second biggest group being those with bachelor's degrees (31.4%). Seventy six respondents (16.2%) had a doctoral degree. A very small percentage of the participants (6.2%) had a one or two year diploma, and only five respondents had secondary school or less.

TABLE 4.5: Respondents Educational Qualifications

Educational Qualification	Percent	Frequency
1. Secondary school or less	1%	5
2. 1 or 2 year diploma	6.2%	29
3. Bachelor's Degree	31.4%	147
4. Master's Degree	45.1%	211
5. Doctoral Degree	16.2%	76
Total	*100.0*	468

4.3.5 Job Classification

Out of 468 respondents, 210 (44.9%), were administrators, while 234 respondents (50%) were faculty members. A third group of 24, making up only 5.1% of the participants, hold other various roles such as technical positions. The frequency distribution for job classification is presented in table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6: Respondents Job classifications

Job classification	Percent	Frequency
1.Administrative employee	44.9%	210
2.Faculty member	50.0%	234
3. Other	5.1%	24
Total	*100.0*	468

4.3.6 Work Experience in HEIs

Respondents were asked the number of years of experience they had working in higher education institutions. The majority of the respondents (39%) have worked in higher education institutions for less than 5 years, while 31.6 percent had between 6 and 10 years of experience. 15.2 percent have worked for between 11 and 15 years, and similarly, 14.1 percent of the respondents had more than 15 years of experience in higher education institutions.

TABLE 4.7: Respondents Work Experience

Work Experience (years)	Percent	Frequency
1. Less than 5	39.1%	183
2. 6 -10	31.6%	148
3.11-15	15.2%	71
4. more than 15	14.1%	66
Total	*100.0*	468

4.4 Results and Discussion

In this section, the findings of the study are presented, analyzed and discussed in accordance with each of the four research questions. Hence, section 4.4 includes four main sections; each section is divided into a number of subsections in order to fully examine the current situation of leadership practices in light of TQM principles.

This discussion utilizes information from the questionnaires and interviews, and is supported with evidence from the literature.

4.4.1 Research Question 1: What is the overall state of leadership practices in implementing a quality management system in administrative affairs at Omani private HEIs?

The aim of this section is to present and analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews regarding the first research question: What is the overall state of leadership practices in implementing a quality management system in administrative affairs at Omani private HEIs?

Participants were surveyed in order to answer this question and find out if a quality system is currently fundamental at all institutions within the higher education section, as well as determine whether the current practices of leadership are in line with TQM principles. The respondents were given 55 five-point Likert scale questions (1. strongly disagree; 2. disagree; 3. uncertain; 4. Agree; 5. Strongly agree). The questions were distributed over 7 principles of TQM namely: (1) senior leadership, (2) strategic planning, (3) training programs, (4) empowerment & involvement, (5) reward & motivation, (6) teamwork, and (7) continuous improvement.

In order to gain insight into the overall situation regarding leadership practices, the questionnaire sought responses from both administrators and faculty members. The findings of the questionnaires were reported and analyzed via a descriptive statistical method using means and standard deviations. The means and standard deviations were calculated for each principle of the survey. Sixty seven respondents skipped these questions, so 401 respondents provided usable answers (86%). Furthermore, this section includes the results of the eight interviews related to this research question. Information from the eight interviews reflects senior leadership's perception of their quality management work. The outlining of these results will be followed by a discussion linking the findings with the literature review.

Table 4.8 presents the respondents' perceptions towards leadership practices linked to the seven TQM principles. In order to interpret these responses, the means were ranked from the most positive to the most negative.

TABLE 4.8: Perceptions towards Leadership Practices - Mean and Std. Deviation for each TQM principles

Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Second Principle: Strategic Planning	3.50	0.69
Seventh Principle: Continuous Improvement	3.42	0.73
Sixth Principle: Teamwork	3.24	0.84
First Principle: Senior Leadership	3.16	1.00
Fourth Principle: Empowerment & Involvement	2.95	0.93
Third Principle: Training Programs	2.91	0.94
Fifth Principle: Reward & Motivation	2.88	0.91
Total	3.15	0.86

As can been seen in table 4.8 the mean score for the principles of TQM ranged from a low of 2.88 to a high of 3.50. Therefore, generally, the degree with which leadership practices in private HEIs are perceived as positive was moderate. The empirical findings show that the second principle, strategic planning, with a mean of 3.50, appears to have the highest level of positive perceptions regarding leadership practices. These respondents believed that their institutions had a strategic plan, including a vision, a mission, and objectives. This was followed by the "continuous improvement" principle with a mean of 3.42; in contrast, the lowest principle was "Reward & Motivation", with a mean of 2.88, which reflects the lowest positive perceptions of leadership practices.

Concerning the results obtained using semi-structured interviews, the findings pointed to a significant number of advantages in implementing the quality management philosophy in higher educational settings. The qualitative findings show that having a quality management system in place is a very important element for all Omani private HEIs. The interviewees stated that the quality management system has fundamentally changed the management style in the private universities and colleges. The quality system has helped to facilitate complex procedures, reduce red tape at the institutions, and improve services provided to beneficiaries. To some extent, the perceptions of senior leadership and staff were similar regarding the importance of strategic planning for educational institutions. The interviewees agreed that successful implementation of the quality management system requires an effective strategic plan. Of the 8 interviewees, 7 believed that achieving short-term and long-term goals of the institution requires practical strategic planning followed by an operational plan and a

quality monitoring plan. Interviewee 3 stated "*I can't imagine that any educational institution in the 21st century without a strategic plan, and without strategic planning how the organization would be continued and improved its competitiveness, performance and quality of its services?*". Interviewee 7 said "*Clearly, well designed plan give us a roadmap for working style that must be followed, so we know what exactly want to do*". It can be concluded that strategic planning at Omani private colleges and universities is one of the most important results of the application of a quality management system.

In relation to the principle of "continuous improvement", which has the next highest mean value, the respondents agreed that development and continuous updating was among the priorities of their institutions. Similarly, qualitative results stressed that the institution should work on updating its own quality management system based upon the requirements of the labor market and its employees' needs. The interviewees agreed that any institution that doesn't pay special attention to continuous improvement will be left behind. Thus, to ensure continued improvement, the strategic plan should be revised on regular basis, and take into account the involvement of staff in improvement and development of an institution's policies. Interviewee 1 mentioned that "*any revision or adjustment of current policy or making a decision, this process done by taking opinions of all the staff*". However, this view isn't supported by an OAAA panel which indicated in its report "*the majority of the institution's staff did not seem to be aware of the institution's current Strategic Plan, its processes or its progress* (OAAA, November, 2012, p.16).

Relating to principles 6 and 1, quantitative results indicated that practices were perceived to be at a moderate level with a mean score above 3.00 (the theoretical mean), while the mean of principles 4 and 3 recorded means of less than 3.00. These results reveal the following order in the positive perceptions of leadership practices in the implementation of a quality system: teamwork, senior leadership, empowerment & involvement, and training programs.

The fifth principle of reward and motivation, as shown in table 4.8, recorded the lowest rate with a mean of 2.88. The respondents felt that leadership practices regarding the level of rewarding and motivating was not up to their expectations. This result revealed the conflicting views held by leadership and staff. In contrast to staff

perceptions, senior leadership stated that they are totally committed to staff motivation by rewarding them materially and personally for their distinguished work, encouraging them toward self learning, and providing regular training. They added that staff satisfaction comes first and is considered more important than merely reaping profits. Furthermore, the qualitative findings show that interviewee's believe motivating staff is the best way for continuous improvement within private HEIs. The participants stressed the importance of personal growth for employees and their promotion to higher positions in the institution they belong to. They also indicated that a stimulating environment helps in increasing employee productivity and reducing staff turnover; two factors which lead to high job satisfaction, improvement of institutional performance, and improvement in service quality in general. Interviewee 5 stated that "*By end of the academic year, the top management select accomplishment list to send an appreciation letter to each employee who has scored success along with incentive award for his/her outstanding performance, I think this is the most motivation that employees wishes to receive*". Nevertheless, most of the interviewees pointed out that private institutions lacked clear employee incentive and reward policies. Interviewee 8 explained "*to be honest with you, at the present, we don't have system of motivation and reward, but I think the college's leadership is aware of importance of having such system. We need to find away to motivate the staff*". A 2013 panel from the OAAA confirmed this view by clearly stating in its report *"the private institutions should develop and implement clear and transparent criteria and processes by which both academic and administrative staff may be promoted or awarded financial bonuses in order to recognize good performance and encourage staff retention"* (OAAA, June 2013, p. 47).

The finding of this study is consistent with previous research conducted by Hurst (2002). His research revealed that there were no rewards, recognition or incentives provided by of three academic colleges of a northwestern public university in the U.S. to implement a quality management system. As previously outlined in the literature review, rewards and recognition were identified as being very important in the TQM process (Hurst, 2002). Studies have indicated that for a leadership to be effective in increasing levels of staff motivation, they must pay special attention to staff requirements, encouragement, and support (Horner, 1997; Judge & Piccolo,

2004; Muhammad et al., 2009; Lang, 2010). Further support comes from quality gurus, who believe that motivating and rewarding followers at all levels is important for building a successful quality management system within any organization (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1989, 1995).

4.4.2 Research Question 2: What are the areas of strength and weakness in current leadership practices at Omani private HEIs?

The aim of this section is to present and analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires regarding the second research question: what are the areas of strength and weakness in current leadership practices at Omani private HEIs?

In order to answer this question, and to identify areas of strength and weakness in leadership practices at Omani private HEIs, 55 questions distributed on seven principles were given to participants. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed to determine strong and weak areas in detail for each defined principle. The results, consisting of the means and standard deviations for responses, are shown in tables 4.9-4.15. These results show whether, overall, respondents have positive attitudes or negative attitudes towards certain practices. Thus, principle statements that received higher means represent stronger areas of leadership practice, while statements with lower mean values represent weaker areas of leadership practice. The principles were arranged based on analysis of the previous question results from the most to the least positive perceptions regarding leadership practices, as follows: strategic planning, continuous improvement, teamwork, senior leadership, empowerment & involvement, training programs, and reward & motivation.

4.4.2.1 Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is fundamental for a quality management system in the education sector. A strategic plan includes policy formulation; and setting an institution's vision, mission, and objectives. Thus, creating a strategic plan is one of the main tasks leadership must complete for any HEI (Osseo-Asare et al., 2005).

Principle two, strategic planning, consisted of nine items in the questionnaire. Overall the statements of this principle were found to be moderately favorable, with a mean higher than 3.00(the theoretical mean). The results for item number (1) revealed

considerable agreement, with a mean of 3.97. Therefore, most of the respondents agree that their institutions have a clear strategic plan. The item in this principle that received the second highest levels of agreement from respondents was item number (2). The mean value for this item was 3.83. While item number (5) recorded the lowest agreement rate among respondents, with a mean of 2.95. As this mean is less than 3.00, it is considered a weak area of leadership practice. The results reveal that even though the respondents believe the objectives of their institution's plan are related to the needs of Omani society, a large percentage of them did not believe that those objectives are related to the expectations and needs of the staff. Furthermore, not all the staff within an institution seems to have a clear understanding of the objectives of their institutions. The results of respondents' perceptions of leadership practices related to strategic planning are presented in table 4.9.

TABLE 4.9: *The Mean and S. Deviation for Items of the Second Principle – Strategic Planning*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The university/college has a clear strategic plan (vision, mission and objectives).	3.97	0.78
2. The objectives of the institution plan are related to the needs of Omani society.	3.83	0.79
3. Institution planning is relevant to the developmental plans in the Ministry of Higher Education.	3.75	0.79
4. The institution's leadership keeps strong connections to the ongoing changes in the job market.	3.57	0.81
6. In the institution, there is a distinct vision and strategy for continuous quality improvement.	3.51	0.86
7. Leadership always takes into consideration the sufficient time to complete the strategic plan.	3.45	0.81
8. Leadership regularly reviews the effectiveness of the strategic and operational plans.	3.39	0.86
9. The institution's plan helps in facilitating and improving administrative work.	3.05	1.07
5. The objectives of the institution's plan are related to the expectations and needs of the staff.	2.95	1.05

In spite of the existence of strategic plans in private universities and colleges, the Audit Committee of the OAAA has observed during some of its auditing visits that these plans often lack effectiveness due to the absence of an operational plan (OAAA,

December 2009; May 2011; September 2012; August 2013). In addition, the committee noted a lack of alignment of the institution's plan with the budgeting process (OAAA, October 2011; September 2012), and a lack of a comprehensive professional development plan for both academic and administrative staff (OAAA, August 2012; March 2011; August, 2010). A 2012 audit report from the OAAA stressed that" *It was nevertheless confirmed during interviews with staff members that there is no formal staff development plan in place, and no specific budget is allocated towards staff development*" (OAAA, September, 2012, p. 45).

4.4.2.2 Continuous Improvement

The second survey principle - continuous improvement - is also considered a fundamental element for an institution's success. Deming (1986) emphasized that quality is a never-ending cycle of continuous improvement. In addition, Hills and Stewart-David (2001) described continuous improvement as an atmosphere that features team action and good leadership. This principle was made up of eight statements linked to quality management implementation. The results showed respondents' perceptions of leadership practices related to continuous improvement.

The results generally revealed that six out of eight statements related to this principle of continuous improvement recorded a high rate of agreement, with a mean of more than 3.40. Statement numbers (4) and (1) recorded the highest rates of agreement with means of 3.65 and 3.62 respectively. The respondents were favorable with respect to their institutions' work towards continuous improvement approaches. They stated that their institutions' leadership believes that continuous improvement in quality leads to a better use of resources. Moreover, the staff believed that their institutions work on updating their own quality management system. This is not supported by a Salameh et al. (2011) study, which revealed that continuous improvement was not among the priorities of management in Jordanian universities and colleges.

However, the results also showed that statement number (5) recorded a low rate of agreement, with a mean of 3.04. Even though the mean of this item is higher than 3.00 (the theoretical mean), it is the lowest placed item in the scale. The respondents mostly disagreed with the statement that their institutions work on

updating administrative work in a way that is relevant to quality management. Table 4.10 presents the perception of respondents towards leadership practices related to continuous improvement.

TABLE 4.10: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of the Seventh Principle - Continuous Improvement*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
4. University/college leadership believes that continuous improvement in quality leads to a better use of resources.	3.65	0.83
1. The institution works on updating its own quality management system.	3.62	0.89
2. Institute activities are reviewed for continuous improvement on a regular basis.	3.57	0.80
6. The institution responds to the changes taking place in the surrounding environment.	3.50	0.81
3. The institution updates its quality system based upon the requirements of the labor market and domestic community.	3.48	0.79
8. Constant efforts are made to reinforce planning and development activities in my institution.	3.44	0.93
7. My university/college supports any initiative that would lead to improve the organizational process.	3.41	1.08
5. My institution works on updating the administrative process in a way that is relevant to quality management.	3.04	1.05

4.4.2.3 Teamwork

Enhancing teamwork is one of the pillars of TQM. Therefore, encouraging and building collaborative teamwork is one of the main functions of higher education leadership (Osseo-Asare et al., 2005). Collective work also has been emphasized in Islamic teaching encouraging people to work in cooperation and teamwork (Al-Khasawneh et al.2013). In this principle, respondents were asked to answer seven questions related to leadership practices linked to teamwork at their institution. As seen in table 4.11, generally, the statements recorded moderate rates of agreement, with a mean higher than 3.00. Item number (7) had the highest mean score, at 3.78. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that teamwork encourages private universities and college staff to understand administrative process and its procedures. Additionally, the administrators and faculty members thought that teamwork helps them cooperate with their institutions' leadership.

In contrast, item number (5) has the lowest mean value, at 2.91. This reflects the disagreement shown by respondents regarding the statement "*team's leadership is appointed on the basis of their interest and passion for the quality issues*". Thus, this item represents an area of weakness in leadership practice. Table 4.11 presents the perception of respondents towards leadership practices associated with teamwork.

TABLE 4.11: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of the Sixth Principle - Teamwork*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
7. Teamwork encourages university/college staff to understand administrative work and its procedures.	3.78	0.84
6. Teamwork helps staff cooperate with their university/college leadership	3.69	0.85
1. The work in my institution depends on teamwork.	3.21	1.1
2. Leadership is keen to form an effective working team.	3.07	1.14
3. The institutional leadership supports group work.	3.02	1.09
4. In my institution, leadership appreciates suggestions and contributions of team members.	3.01	1.13
5. Team's leadership is appointed on the basis of their interest and passion for the quality issues.	2.91	1.04

The literature provides evidence supporting the findings of this study. For instance, research by Manochehri et al. (2012) indicates that teamwork can be considered one of the strongest driving forces for implementing quality management in the Gulf Corporations Council educational institutions. In addition, Hazzard (1993) concluded that increased interdepartmental cooperation within institutions was among the areas of strength in quality management system in higher education, and led to enhanced problem solving. By contrast, Salameh et al. (2011) found that there was no focus on teamwork in Jordanian universities and colleges.

4.4.2.4 Senior Leadership

The literature overwhelmingly asserts that senior leadership is a critical factor in the success or failure of a quality management system (Zairi, 1994; Antonaros, 2010). Also, in Islamic quality management system, effective leadership considered as a necessary need to ensure that the administration aspects will be running smoothly (Mohamed et al., 2013). This part of the discussion will examine items in the first principle of the questionnaire related to leadership. The principle consisted of seven statements.

As illustrated by table 4.12, the mean scores range from 2.99 to 3.40. The results of the analysis revealed high levels of agreement with item number (6) "*University/college senior leadership provides effective communication channels between them and staff*", as it was found to have a mean score of 3.40. Another item that respondents generally agreed with was is item number (1), (mean 3.28) which states, "*senior leadership acts as an example in terms of the development of administrative work quality"*. It can therefore, be concluded that the areas of strength related to leadership practice for this principle, are the existence of good channels of communication between senior leadership and staff, and serious attempts to improve the quality of administrative work at Omani private HEIs.

On the other hand, item number (7) "*senior leadership hold periodical meetings to discuss the strengths and challenges in the current quality management system*" had the lowest mean score at 2.99. Of all the statements in this principle, the respondents agree the least with this statement, which suggests that most respondents believe that management does not hold review meetings on quality issues. The following table 4.12 shows the administrators and faculty members' perceptions towards the first principle (senior leadership).

TABLE 4.12: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of the First Principle – Senior Leadership*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
6. University/college senior leadership provides effective communication channels between themselves and staff.	3.40	1.08
1. Senior leadership acts as an example in terms of development of administrative work quality.	3.28	1.10
2. Senior leadership has formulated a quality steering committee/ council to speed up the implementation of the quality management system.	3.19	1.23
3. Senior leadership of my institution actively supports improvement by providing necessary resources and assistance.	3.09	1.17
5. Senior leadership is keen to spread a quality culture among staff through quality activities such as workshops, meetings, seminars and conferences.	3.08	1.22
4. Senior leadership makes organizational changes that agree with quality requirements.	3.04	1.15
7. Senior leadership holds periodic meetings to discuss the strengths and challenges in the current quality management system.	2.99	1.19

As the literature has indicated, the degree of support and visibility that senior leadership offers in implementing a quality management system is fundamental for sustaining quality and performance improvement in HEIs. According to Osseo-Asare et al. (2005) "*leadership is central in all TQM implementations in HEIs and seems to be the most critical factor for its success*" (p. 149). Most academics and practitioners agree that without leadership commitment it is impossible to implement TQM in an educational institution (Dahlgaard et al., 1995; Guillen & Gonzalez, 2001). Das et al. (2011) confirmed that it is a necessity for senior leadership to perform as leadership in implementing TQM. Their study found that organizations with high leadership competencies execute TQM principles more effectively and are able to produce higher quality practices. The role of senior leadership is to ensure that the proper resources and support are given to promoting a push for quality. On the other hand, the outcome of Antonaros' (2010) study contradicts much of the quality management research. It has been argued for decades that the lack of success in the West in relation to TQM was directly linked to leadership's failed understanding and a general lack of support for total quality programs. Antonaros, however, showed that leadership plays a smaller role in the outcomes of TQM than what is commonly believed to be the case. The findings of this remarkable study have been previously investigated in the literature review.

4.4.2.5 Empowerment & Involvement

Studies have showed that successful implementation of quality management within an institution is dependent on leadership's role in empowering their staff and involve them in quality management process (Zairi, 1994; Buch & Rivers, 2001).

In order to define leadership practices in relation to employees' empowerment and involvement, the participants were asked seven questions. The questionnaire results revealed that six out of seven statements related to this principle recorded a moderate rate of agreement among respondents, with the mean value being lower than 3.00. Thereby, reflecting a perceived weak area of leadership practices. Item number (1) "*in my institution staff and leadership have a shared vision about the quality management system*" had the highest mean score, at 3.35. Item number (3) recorded the second highest rate with a mean of 2.97. Despite the mean score of this item being

less than 3.00, it can be considered as having a high rate of agreement when compared to other leadership practices in this principle. It is clear from the results that majority of the respondents agreed that leadership at Omani private institutions encourage the staff to be involved in developing work policies. On the other hand, item number (4) had the lowest mean value of 2.75. Therefore, this item represents a weak area in leadership practices. The respondents disagreed that the administration system at private HEIs allows all members to participate in the decision-making process. This reflects a lack of real involvement among administrators and faculty members at these institutions. Table 4.13 shows the level of perceived empowerment and involvement being practiced at private HEIs.

TABLE 4.13: The Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of the Fourth Principle, Empowerment & Involvement

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. In my institution staff and leadership have a shared vision about the quality management system.	3.35	0.96
3. Leadership at my institution encourages their team to be involved in developing work policies and procedures.	2.97	1.10
6. Leadership has been given me the chance to participate in the quality team.	2.95	1.14
7. Leadership practices allow staff to provide feedback about the current quality management system.	2.94	1.12
2. Changes have been made to my college/university organizational structure to facilitate staff empowerment.	2.85	1.05
5. Leadership includes staff opinions when taking work decisions.	2.82	1.08
4. The administration system at my institution allows all members to participate in decision-making process.	2.75	1.06

According to Oakland (2011), empowerment means all employees should be able to do what is needed and expected of them, but that for this to occur it is first necessary for leadership to specify what employees are really required to do and what standards of performance are expected. McCarthy's (2005) study revealed that when leadership was given training in empowerment, decision-making was done by the lowest possible decision-maker, and employees were expected to take responsibility for their actions. In other words, staff were largely self-directed. Results of a study by Osseo-Asare et al. (2005) support the findings of the current study. They found there was a weak link between leadership practices and staff empowerment in UK higher

education, and that management and leadership practices meant to empower staff are not effective.

Additionally, according to Das et al. (2011), in order to improve an institutions' performance, organizations need to change the management system by including more employee participation. This is best done by involving employees in problem solving, decision-making, and strategy formulation. Hazzard (1993) suggested that involving people is what makes TQM such a powerful philosophy. Involving people in the decision-making process in turn leads to improving the quality of their work environment and enabling a better use of resources. Similarly, Islamic perspective paid considerable attention to individuals' participation in decision-making using the word *Al Shura* (consultation) as a basic rule in Islam whether in the workplace or in society as a whole (Hammoudeh, 2012; Al-Khasawneh et al.2013). Al Sawafi (2012), found that employee involvement was present with regards to most quality practices at the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman, which not support the findings of this study.

4.4.2.6 Training Programs

As the literature has demonstrated, the absence of training and education, whether for leadership or staff, is considered one of the main obstacles for implementing a quality management system effectively (Adebanjo & Kehoe, 1998). This principle reflects the staff perception of their leadership in relation to training and education levels. Respondents were asked to answer nine questions related to this principle.

The results of the analysis showed that item number (2) had a mean score of 3.23, the highest for this principle. This signals an area of strength in leadership practice, suggesting that leadership in private HEIs participated in training programs. Another item that received a high mean score was item number (3), "*leadership encourages staff to attend training programs in order to develop their abilities and potentials*", with mean score of 3.00. Conversely, the results show that seven out of nine statements had means lower than 3.00. Thus, in general, it can be concluded that most statements in the training program principle reflect weaknesses in leadership practices. The lowest mean scores were recorded for items 4, 5 (both 2.78) and 7

(2.76). Therefore, even though employees agreed that their institution had offered training programs and leadership encourages them to attend those programs; they believed that available programs did not meet their needs. The respondents stated that they were not offered training in line with the changes and developments in the field of quality, nor were they trained to use scientific methods to deal with their institution's problems. Meaning, offered training programs were not perceived to match the latest trends in quality management system. The results of respondents' perceptions on leadership practices related to training programs are presented in table 4.14.

TABLE 4.14: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of the Third Principle - Training Programs*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
2. Leadership participates in the training programs.	3.23	0.94
3. Leadership encourages staff to attend training programs in order to develop their abilities and potentials.	3.00	1.15
1. Training in quality improvement techniques is a main part of each staff development plan.	2.99	1.16
8. Leadership encourages staff to apply methods and techniques learned from the training.	2.91	1.10
9. Leadership encourages staff to provide feedback about the quality of training they have received.	2.90	1.10
6. The training programs are practical and can be implemented in the workplace.	2.84	1.03
4. Staff members of my institution are constantly trained in line with the changes and developments in the field of quality.	2.78	1.07
5. Staff members are trained to use scientific methods in dealing with institution's problems.	2.78	1.01
7. The training programs are well-structured and match the latest trends in quality management system.	2.76	0.99

The literature supports staff beliefs that training and education is fundamental to the successful implementation of a quality system in HEIs. There is therefore a real need for large educational and training programs to help management and employees with the knowledge and motivation required for the quality improvement process (Dahlgaard et al., 1995).

4.4.2.7 Reward & Motivation

Leadership literature stresses the importance of developing the relationship between leadership and subordinates through a fair system of motivation and reward for completed tasks. Leadership attempts to motivate and reward their followers by promptly fulfilling salient needs (Bolden et al., 2003; Stone et al., 2004).

Respondents were asked to answer eight questions related to their institutions' leadership practices with regards to systems for reward and motivation. The results showed that the respondents agreed with statement number (8) "*staff members are always respected and appreciated*" which, at 3.45, was the highest recorded. The only other statement receiving high agreement levels (3.34) was statement number (2), which revealed that respondents felt satisfied in their institutions. Item number (6) had the lowest mean value, at 2.61. This reflects a belief held by the respondents that there were no reward and motivation system to encourage them to contribute to quality improvements. Hence, this is considered a weak area among leadership practices. The results of administrators and faculty members' perceptions on leadership practices related to reward and motivation are presented in table 4.15.

TABLE 4.15: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of the Fifth Principle – Reward & Motivation*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
8. Staff members are always respected and appreciated.	3.45	1.08
1. I feel satisfied in my job.	3.34	1.11
4. Leadership constantly motivates the staff.	2.81	1.10
7. Leadership honors hard working staff.	2.74	1.11
5. Continuous improvements have been made in the reward systems to promote quality in my institution.	2.72	1.05
2. In my institution, the system of promotion is clear and well known by all staff members.	2.71	1.07
3. Leadership rewards staff materially and personally for their distinguished work.	2.70	1.03
6. Staff members are rewarded with incentives to encourage them to contribute to quality improvements.	2.61	0.99

Research by Wilcox (1990), Ehigie and Akpan (2004) and Das et al. (2011) discussed this phenomenon. In terms of motivating staff, according to Wilcox (1990) each employee is looking to be valued and wanted, and raising a person's self- esteem

is a great stimulator. He concluded" *Good managers who lead by paying attention to personal motivation will certainly rejuvenate their most important asset - people - by improving morale, reducing turnover and getting a better job done. This is what Total Quality is largely about*" (p. 269). Additionally, a study conducted by the University of Michigan found a direct association between staff motivation and the financial performance of their organizations. The study found that the greater the staff engagement and motivation, the better the staff and organization performance (Eich, 2012).

Furthermore, organizations that have been unable to reward or motivate their staff to become involved in TQM are less likely to perceive TQM as having been successful (Das et al., 2011). It may not be possible for many organizations in tough economic times to reward their staff, however, this situation is not a license to disregard staff accomplishment, rather, it may be the best time to give them a lift (Eich, 2012). Some research has found that in TQM employees who perceive high levels of reward would be significantly more inclined to practice TQM than those who perceive low levels of reward (Das et al., 2011). Studies have recognized reward as important in influencing employees to practice TQM, and increasing employee satisfaction. Jeryes's (2004) study measured the level of satisfaction among faculty members and administrative staff related to the application of TQM at Birzeit University, Palestine. The findings revealed the existence of satisfaction among the respondents for academic and administrative processes, which is consistent with this study's results. However, Ehigie and Akpan's (2004) study found that reward alone is not strong enough to influence employees in the practice of TQM.

4.4.3 Research Question Number 3: Are there any differences in leadership practices based on participants' gender, nationality, age, educational qualification, job classification and work experience in HEIs?

The third research question asked if differences exists among respondents based on selected descriptive variables (gender, nationality, age, educational qualification, job classification and work experience in HEIs), which influence perceptions concerning certain quality practices of leadership.

In order to address this research question, independent samples t-tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post hoc tests were used as statistical tools to analyze data. T-tests were used in order to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between group means for two categorical variables. While one-way ANOVA was performed to compare more than two groups. Six demographic categories were analyzed, namely gender, nationality, age, educational qualification, job classification, and work experience in HEIs. The leadership practices analyzed included the seven principles of TQM identified in the survey instrument as follows (1) Senior Leadership, (2) Strategic Planning, (3) Training Programs, (4) Empowerment & Involvement, (5) Reward & Motivation, (6) Teamwork, and (7) Continuous Improvement.

4.4.3.1 Gender

The gender of respondents was analyzed to determine if it is a factor in quality management leadership practices. The means of the responses were analyzed for two groups - male and female. An independent samples t-test was applied as a statistical test to analyze data of this category. The independent t-test is a statistical test of significance that indicates whether the apparent difference between two means is due to chance or a real difference. Therefore, this test was conducted to explore the impact of gender on staff attitudes towards leadership practices.

Table 4.16 presents significant results of the t-test for seven principles of the questionnaire, comparing the perceptions of male and female about quality management practices of leadership.

TABLE 4.16: Independent T-Test Results for Gender Differences in Leadership Practices

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T value	P value
Principle.1.mean	1. Male	211	3.21	1.01	399	1.15	0.25
	2. Female	190	3.09	0.99			
Principle.2.mean	1. Male	211	3.52	0.70	399	0.55	0.57
	2. Female	190	3.48	0.68			
Principle.3.mean	1. Male	211	2.97	0.95	399	1.53	0.12
	2. Female	190	2.83	0.92			
Principle.4.mean	1. Male	211	3.00	0.95	399	0.99	0.31
	2. Female	190	2.90	0.89			
Principle.5.mean	1. Male	211	2.95	0.92	399	1.42	0.15
	2. Female	190	2.82	0.89			
Principle.6.mean	1. Male	211	3.28	0.85	399	1.02	0.30
	2. Female	190	3.19	0.83			
Principle.7.mean	1. Male	211	3.42	0.72	399	0.22	0.81
	2. Female	190	3.43	0.74			

**** Significant at p < 0.05***

As can be seen in table 4.16, using the t-test for independent samples with a 0.05 level of significance, there were no statistically significant differences in perceptions about leadership practices between the two compared groups for all principles, that is, where significance is higher than 0.05. Clearly, the results show that the opinions of the two groups, males and females, related to the seven areas of leadership practices were indistinguishable because there were no statistically significant differences between them.

4.4.3.2 Nationality

The nationality of respondents was also analyzed to determine if it was a factor in the perceptions of leadership practices. The means of the responses were analyzed for two groups, Omani and non-Omani. The independent samples t-test was used as a statistical test to analyze the data for this category. Table 4.17 provides the comparisons between Omani and non-Omani.

TABLE 4.17: *Independent T-Test Results for Nationality Differences in Leadership Practices*

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T value	P value
Principle.1.mean	1. Omani	165	2.66	0.89	361	9.20	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.51	0.92			
Principle.2.mean	1. Omani	165	3.23	0.60	380	7.01	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.69	0.69			
Principle.3.mean	1. Omani	165	2.54	0.77	390	7.02	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.16	0.96			
Principle.4.mean	1. Omani	165	2.56	0.78	385	7.78	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.23	0.92			
Principle.5.mean	1. Omani	165	2.53	0.72	395	7.18	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.13	0.94			
Principle.6.mean	1. Omani	165	2.94	0.70	389	6.42	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.45	0.87			
Principle.7.mean	1. Omani	165	3.13	0.64	376	7.27	0.00
	2. Non-Omani	236	3.63	0.72			

**** Significant at p < 0.05***

It can be concluded from the independent samples t-test results that there were significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the means of the two groups. In all seven principles, $p = 0.00$, which was less than the significance threshold of 0.05. In other words, the mean scores of the respondents in each of these principles were not equal with regard to the nationality variable. This means that the Omani staff and expatriate staff had different opinions on quality management practices of leadership. The mean for all seven principles for non-Omanis was higher than that of the Omanis.

This indicator reflects the fact that expatriate staff had more positive views about the leadership practices in their institutions. This result could have occurred due to non-Omanis having had extensive international experience with various types of leadership, which allowed them to compare the practices of leadership domestically and internationally. This is a significant finding, as the majority of both administrators and faculty staff in the Omani private HEIs sector are international employees from different countries.

4.4.3.3 Age

The age of respondents was analyzed to determine if it was a factor in the perceptions of leadership practices. To achieve this, the means of the responses were analyzed. The data analysis for this section was conducted using a one-way ANOVA, which is used to compare the means of two or more samples against each other.

Respondents' age was divided into four groupings:

- Code 1 = under 30
- Code 2 = 31 – 39
- Code 3 = 40 – 49
- Code 4 = 50 or above

The results of administrators and faculty members' perceptions of leadership practices in accordance with age groups are presented in table 4.18.

TABLE 4.18: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Leadership Practices Based on Age Groups*

	Categories (years)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principle.1.mean	1.Under 30	89	2.96	0.98
	2.31-39	184	3.20	1.00
	3.40-49	94	3.09	1.02
	4.50 or above	34	3.61	0.82
	Total	401	3.16	1.00
Principle.2.mean	1.Under 30	89	3.36	0.69
	2.31-39	184	3.56	0.69
	3.40-49	94	3.41	0.69
	4.50 or above	34	3.79	0.61
	Total	401	3.50	0.69
Principle.3.mean	1.Under 30	89	2.77	0.91
	2.31-39	184	2.97	0.95
	3.40-49	94	2.82	0.94
	4.50 or above	34	3.14	0.92
	Total	401	2.91	0.94
Principle.4.mean	1.Under 30	89	2.80	0.86
	2.31-39	184	3.00	0.95
	3.40-49	94	2.87	0.93

	Categories (years)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	4.50 or above	34	3.31	0.85
	Total	401	2.95	0.93
Principle.5.mean	1.Under 30	89	2.73	0.87
	2.31-39	184	2.97	0.95
	3.40-49	94	2.80	0.87
	4.50 or above	34	3.06	0.81
	Total	401	2.88	0.91
Principle.6.mean	1.Under 30	89	3.13	0.81
	2.31-39	184	3.31	0.84
	3.40-49	94	3.14	0.81
	4.50 or above	34	3.45	0.96
	Total	401	3.24	0.84
Principle.7.mean	1.Under 30	89	3.29	0.70
	2.31-39	184	3.48	0.76
	3.40-49	94	3.35	0.69
	4.50 or above	34	3.67	0.65
	Total	401	3.42	0.73

Clearly, from table 4.18, the mean scores for the age group *50 or above* were higher than the other three groups in all principles, while the age group *under 30* recorded a low rate of agreement in all principles. Generally, the results show that the statement associated with principle number (2), strategic planning, received the highest agreement from respondents in all age groups with a mean of 3.50. On the other hand, principle number (3), training programs, had the lowest mean score (2.91). This result indicates disagreement about leadership practices at private HEIs relating to this principle, and that, based on the low agreement across age groups, administrators and faculty of various ages believe that training provided on quality management is not sufficient.

Table 4.19 displays one-way ANOVA results of respondent age on the perceptions of quality management practices of leadership. This test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between age group means.

TABLE 4.19: *One-way ANOVA Results of Respondents' Age Groups*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Principle.1.mean	Between Groups	11.1	3.00	3.70	3.74	0.01
	Within Groups	392	397	0.98		
	Total	403	400			
Principle.2.mean	Between Groups	5.92	3.00	1.97	4.16	0.00
	Within Groups	188	397	0.47		
	Total	193	400			
Principle.3.mean	Between Groups	5.09	3.00	1.69	1.92	0.12
	Within Groups	351	397	0.88		
	Total	356	400			
Principle.4.mean	Between Groups	7.33	3.00	2.44	2.86	0.03
	Within Groups	339	397	0.85		
	Total	346	400			
Principle.5.mean	Between Groups	5.16	3.00	1.72	2.09	0.10
	Within Groups	326	397	0.82		
	Total	331	400			
Principle.6.mean	Between Groups	4.54	3.00	1.51	2.13	0.09
	Within Groups	281	397	0.70		
	Total	286	400			
Principle.7.mean	Between Groups	4.64	3.00	1.54	2.92	0.03
	Within Groups	210	397	0.53		
	Total	215	400			

**** Significant at p < 0.05***

Evidence from table 4.19 suggests there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) among the four age groups in four areas, as follows: (1) leadership [$F(3,397) = 3.74$, $p = 0.01$], (2) strategic planning [$F(3,397) = 4.16$, $p = 0.00$], (4) empowerment & involvement [$F(3,397) = 2.86$, $p = 0.03$] and (7) continuous improvement [$F(3,397) = 2.92$, $p = 0.03$]. The significance level of these principles was below 0.05 which indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the mean of quality management practices of leadership.

In addition, in order to find out which of the specific age groups differed from each other, a Multiple Comparisons tests (post-hoc tests) using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) was performed. The LSD results (see Table 1 in Appendix E) showed that mean differences in principle number (1) between the *under 30* group and the *50 or above* group were statistically significant ($p = 0.00$), between the *30 - 39* group and the *50 or above* group ($p = 0.02$) and between the *40 - 49* group

and *50 or above* group (p = 0.00). In principle number (2) there was mean differences between the *under 30* group and the *31-39* group (p = 0.02) as well as the *50 or above* group (p = 0.00). Mean differences were also found between the *40 - 49* group and the *50 or above* group (p = 0.00), but none of the other age groups were statistically significant. Moreover, results indicated there is a significant difference in leadership practices (principle 4) between the younger group and the eldest group (p = 0.00), as well as between the younger group and the *40 - 49* group (p = 0.01). In the seventh principle, there were mean differences between the *under 30* group and the *31-39* group (p = 0.04) as well as the *50 or above* group (p = 0.01). In addition there was a difference between the *40-49* group and the *50 or above* group (p = 0.02), however, there were no differences between the other age groups. It should be noted here that there were no statistically significant differences between the age groups in principle 3, 5 and 6, which means that the views of the various ages were similar. In general, these results suggest that the eldest group (*50 or above*) has more positive perceptions than the younger group (*under 30*) toward leadership practices linked to the seven areas of TQM. This may be attributed to the difference in experience.

4.4.3.4 Educational Qualification

Due to the limited number in the secondary school or less category, the first two options were combined and recorded. Therefore, the four new categories were: 1 or 2 year diploma or less, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, and Doctoral Degree. Nevertheless, because of large differences in the size of the four groups possibly influencing the accuracy of the results, a randomly selected sample from each of the three largest groups was used in order to get equal sizes for the four groups. Table 4.20 provides descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation of Educational qualification of respondents, on perceptions of leadership practices.

TABLE 4.20: *The Mean and Standard Deviation for Leadership Practices Accounting for Educational Qualification*

	Categories	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principle.1.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	2.60	0.83
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	2.32	0.86
	4. Master's Degree	24	3.00	0.74
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	2.96	0.97
	Total	96	2.72	0.89
Principle.2.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	3.13	0.51
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	3.17	0.43
	4. Master's Degree	24	3.34	0.65
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	3.22	0.80
	Total	96	3.21	0.61
Principle.3.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	2.55	0.95
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	2.34	0.52
	4. Master's Degree	24	2.71	0.75
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	2.48	0.88
	Total	96	2.52	0.80
Principle.4.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	2.55	0.81
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	2.43	0.76
	4. Master's Degree	24	2.89	0.69
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	2.75	0.81
	Total	96	2.65	0.77
Principle.5.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	2.52	0.93
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	2.42	0.66
	4. Master's Degree	24	2.66	0.78
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	2.66	0.73
	Total	96	2.57	0.78
Principle.6.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	2.95	0.73
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	2.76	0.73
	4. Master's Degree	24	3.14	0.76
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	2.69	0.85
	Total	96	2.89	0.78
Principle.7.mean	2. 1 or 2 year diploma or less	24	3.12	0.64
	3. Bachelor's Degree	24	3.09	0.66
	4. Master's Degree	24	3.30	0.61
	5. Doctoral Degree	24	3.24	0.69
	Total	96	3.19	0.64

It is clear from table 4.20 that the second principle, Strategic Planning, has the highest mean score (3.21), while the Training Programs principle (3) has the lowest mean score (2.52). The results also indicate that the staff holding advanced degrees (Masters and PhD) agreed more than staff with 1 or 2 year diploma and Bachelor's degrees in all principles.

In order to compare the quality management practices of leadership with respondents' educational qualification, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. Table 4.21 below summarizes the results of ANOVA.

TABLE 4.21: *Educational qualification – a one-way ANOVA*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Principle.1.mean	Between Groups	7.56	3	2.52	3.48	0.02
	Within Groups	67.7	92	0.73		
	Total	75.3	95			
Principle.2.mean	Between Groups	0.57	3	0.19	0.49	0.68
	Within Groups	35.1	92	0.38		
	Total	35.7	95			
Principle.3.mean	Between Groups	1.70	3	0.56	0.87	0.45
	Within Groups	59.7	92	0.64		
	Total	61.4	95			
Principle.4.mean	Between Groups	1.46	3	0.48	0.81	0.49
	Within Groups	55.4	92	0.60		
	Total	56.8	95			
Principle.5.mean	Between Groups	1.00	3	0.33	0.54	0.65
	Within Groups	56.9	92	0.61		
	Total	57.9	95			
Principle.6.mean	Between Groups	2.98	3	0.99	1.66	0.18
	Within Groups	55.0	92	0.59		
	Total	58.0	95			
Principle.7.mean	Between Groups	0.72	3	0.24	0.56	0.63
	Within Groups	39.3	92	0.42		
	Total	40.1	95			

It is reasonable to expect that staff perceptions of leadership practices would be influenced by their level of education, especially seeing as most staff members had a degree. However, the output of a one-way ANOVA demonstrated clearly there were no significant differences between the groups for the four educational qualification groups ($p < 0.05$), and no significant differences within the four groups in six of the seven principles. The test showed that there were statistically significant differences solely in the Senior Leadership principle. This means that there were no differences in perceptions of leadership practices amongst respondents due to their educational qualification, except in one principle.

To determine what the statistically significant differences are when comparing the four education level groups in the Senior Leadership principle, a post hoc test was conducted using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) to compare each level of education with all other levels.

TABLE 4.22: *Post Hoc Tests for Educational Qualifications*

Dependent Variable	(I) Educational Qualification:	(J) Educational Qualification:	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
	2. 1 or 2 years diploma or less	3. Bachelor's Degree	0.28	0.25
		4. Master's Degree	0.40	0.10
		5. Doctoral Degree	0.36	0.14
Principle1.mean	3. Bachelor's Degree	4. Master's Degree	0.68*	0.00
		5. Doctoral Degree	0.64*	0.01
	4. Master's Degree	5. Doctoral Degree	0.03	0.87

The results of table 4.22 reveal that Master's and PhD holders had significantly higher scores than the other two groups ($p < 0.05$). All other comparisons were not significant. This indicates differences in perspective towards leadership practices between the highest educated groups (Master's & PhD) and the Bachelor's Degree group, with staff holding a master's and PhD degrees agreeing more with statements in all questionnaire principles. However, analysis also showed that there were no significant differences in respondents' opinions about leadership practices between the least educated groups (1 or 2 year diploma) and both the third and fourth group, as well as between the third and fourth group. This reveals that there were

similar beliefs in staff with 1 or 2 years diploma and staff holding advanced degrees, and also there was agreement between masters' holders and PhD holders.

4.4.3.5 Job Classification

For this category, an independent samples T-test was used as a statistical test to analyze data. The means of the responses were analyzed. There were two recorded categories, namely administrative employee and faculty member (the target sample study), the third category (other positions) was excluded due to a limited number of participants in this category. Table 4.23 below, shows the results of a comparison of staff attitudes based on job classification.

TABLE 4.23: *Independent T-Test Results for Job Classification Differences in Perceptions of Leadership Practices*

	Job Classification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T value	P value
Principle.1.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	2.62	0.88	379	10.7	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.59	0.87			
Principle.2.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	3.24	0.62	381	6.99	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.70	0.65			
Principle.3.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	2.96	0.76	377	9.28	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.56	0.81			
Principle.4.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	2.50	0.79	381	9.41	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.20	0.86			
Principle.5.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	2.51	0.78	380	7.73	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.17	0.89			
Principle.6.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	2.90	0.71	379	7.64	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.51	0.83			
Principle.7.mean	1.Administrative employee	184	3.15	0.69	377	6.96	0.00
	2.Faculty member	200	3.64	0.67			

**** Significant at p < 0.05***

The t-test results indicated statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the means of administrative employees and faculty members ($p = 0.00$). Table 4.23 demonstrates that faculty members had a higher mean compared with administrators in all of the seven principles. This indicated that faculty members had more positive views about leadership practices. The difference in responses between the two groups suggests that faculty members are more concerned about quality management practices; this might be due to administrators are more familiar with

administrative tasks and thus their views were more transparent and realistic than faculty members.

4.4.3.6 Work Experience in HEIs

The respondents to the questionnaire have varied years of work experience at Omani private HEIs. Therefore, years of experience were analyzed to determine if there were any significant differences in attitudes among staff with different work experience, toward leadership practices. The means of the responses were analyzed, and for this category, a one-way INOVA was the statistical test used. The survey provided the respondents four options related to length of services at HEIs :(1) less than 5 years, (2) 6-10 years, (3) 11-15 years and (4) more than 15 years. Table 4.24 provides descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation for the dependent variables (7 principles of TQM) for each separate group mentioned above.

TABLE 4.24: *Mean and Standard Deviation for Work Experience Differences in Perceptions of Leadership Practices*

	Categories	N	MEAN	Std. Deviation
Principle.1.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	2.86	0.97
	2. 6 -10 years	125	3.20	0.89
	3.11-15 years	64	3.27	1.04
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.77	0.83
	Total	401	3.16	1.00
Principle.2.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	3.35	0.65
	2. 6 -10 years	125	3.52	0.64
	3.11-15 years	64	3.55	0.76
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.81	0.75
	Total	401	3.50	0.69
Principle.3.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	2.73	0.92
	2. 6 -10 years	125	2.91	0.93
	3.11-15 years	64	2.96	0.96
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.33	0.89
	Total	401	2.91	0.94
Principle.4.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	2.74	0.86
	2. 6 -10 years	125	2.92	0.90
	3.11-15 years	64	3.08	1.07

	Categories	N	MEAN	Std. Deviation
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.48	0.77
	Total	401	2.95	0.93
Principle.5.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	2.68	0.87
	2. 6 -10 years	125	2.88	0.87
	3.11-15 years	64	3.04	0.99
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.31	0.82
	Total	401	2.88	0.91
Principle.6.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	3.06	0.83
	2. 6 -10 years	125	3.22	0.82
	3.11-15 years	64	3.39	0.87
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.63	0.74
	Total	401	3.24	0.84
Principle.7.mean	1. Less than 5 years	157	3.26	0.71
	2. 6 -10 years	125	3.45	0.69
	3.11-15 years	64	3.50	0.74
	4. more than 15 years	55	3.73	0.72
	Total	401	3.42	0.72

Agreement with leadership practices across the four groups shows that the Strategic Planning principle has the highest mean score (3.50). This mean that staff with different experiences agreed on statements related to this principle. On the other hand, the fifth principle, Reward & Motivation, showed the lowest agreement (2.88), which demonstrates that staff with different levels of experience have mostly negative perspectives toward leadership practices linked to reward and motivation. Furthermore, from table 4.24, it can be observed that staff with more experience in HEIs, especially those in the *more than 15 years* group, had greater mean scores compared with the other three groups for all principles.

In order to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between means for respondents with different experience levels, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. Table 4.25 below summarizes the results of ANOVA.

TABLE 4.25: Work Experience – a one-way ANOVA

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Principle.1.mean	Between Groups	35.6	3.00	11.8	12.8	0.00
	Within Groups	368	397	0.92		
	Total	403	400			
Principle.2.mean	Between Groups	9.13	3.00	3.04	6.53	0.00
	Within Groups	184	397	0.46		
	Total	193	400			
Principle.3.mean	Between Groups	14.6	3.00	4.87	5.66	0.00
	Within Groups	341	397	0.86		
	Total	356	400			
Principle.4.mean	Between Groups	23.5	3.00	7.84	9.65	0.00
	Within Groups	322	397	0.81		
	Total	346	400			
Principle.5.mean	Between Groups	17.8	3.00	5.93	7.51	0.00
	Within Groups	313	397	0.79		
	Total	331	400			
Principle.6.mean	Between Groups	15.0	3.00	5.02	7.35	0.00
	Within Groups	271	397	0.68		
	Total	286	400			
Principle.7.mean	Between Groups	9.99	3.00	3.33	6.45	0.00
	Within Groups	205	397	0.51		
	Total	215	400			

Within the experience category, the results of the one-way INOVA test indicated that there were statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in the overall mean among the four groups. Individuals with more years of experience, especially more than 15 years, had the higher means. It is appears from table 4.25 that the level of experience of the respondent was found to influence perceptions regarding leadership practices in all seven TQM areas. Stated simply, this means that staff attitudes were different according to their experiences.

Additionally, in order to know which of the specific groups differed, we can examine the Multiple Comparisons Table which includes the findings of post-hoc tests using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD). The Post-hoc comparisons (see Table 2 in Appendix E) indicated that, in general, there were statistically significant differences between groups with less experience and groups with higher experience in all seven principles. For example, the staff with more than 15 years working experience had statistically significant differences from the three other groups in all principles (sig = 0.00). The staff with less than 5 years working experience had statistically significant differences from the three other groups in principle 1, 2, and 7. However, there were no statistically significant differences between the second and third group except in principle 5, 6 and 7.

These results suggest that, in general, administrators and faculty staff with more than 15 years experience have more positive views about quality management leadership practices within Omani private HEIs. The results also showed there were significant differences in all seven areas.

4.4.4 Research Question 4: What are the challenges that face leadership during their quality management?

For this research question, staff in senior-level positions at private universities and colleges in Oman were posed the question: What are the challenges that face leadership during their quality management?

This section aims to find out the main obstacles that may influence the implementation process of quality management leadership practices within Omani private HEIs. To this end, this section details the specific analysis of 8 interviews with top-level leadership in private HEIs. The study participants were asked to explain the main challenges that they have had during their quality management work in their present position, especially in administrative areas. The analysis of interviews transcripts revealed key themes relevant to challenges facing leaderships in implementing quality management. The five major obstacles identified when dealing with a quality system are illustrated in the following table 4.26 (n = 8):

TABLE 4.26: *Challenges Facing Leadership when Implementing a Quality Management System*

No	Themes/challenges	Number of interviewees who cited this challenge	%
1	Lack of qualified human resources	6	75
2	Lack of quality training	6	75
3	Increasing of administrative and academic burdens	5	62.5
4	Focusing on paperwork	4	50
5	Ineffectiveness of academic partnership with foreign HEIs	4	50

The interviewees explained that since private HEIs are supervised by the MoHE, they are required to make sure that a quality system is implemented. Therefore, it is natural that difficulties and obstacles will arise during the practical application of any novel system. Interviewee 5 commented on this, by stating "*no way ignoring reality and the fact that in our quality work difficulties are there, this is not bad, when I say challenges, this means that this work is not easy*". In order to cover the major challenges that have emerged from the interviews, results section 4.4.4 has been divided into subsections, and each subsection represents one of the challenges encountered by leadership during the quality management processes.

4.4.4.1 Lack of Qualified Human Resources

The main challenge that emerged from the analysis of the interviews was a lack of qualified staff. Six out of the eight senior leaders mentioned that implementing a quality management system requires highly qualified staff to ensure the smoothest possible implementation of the quality system within the institution. Interviewee 2 commented that "*From my experience, the major negative point or problem it seem to be not enough awareness that quality management should be done by professional people, people who are qualified and they exist*", Interviewee 7 expounded on that by saying: "*Lack of specialized HR in general and quality management in particular, is the main obstacle that we face*". He added "*We have done a lot of work, we have achieved what were requests from us, but the work could be more productive if it is done by professional people*". Therefore, in order to deal

with this situation interviewee 4 said: "*Due to a lack of well-equipped staff, to deal with quality issues we are relying on available employees, administrators and teaching staff who are non-specialists in the quality field*".

Even if the institutions desire to hire a specialist in the quality field, they face another problem in limited financial resources. The participants agreed that low pay is another important factor precluding private higher education from hiring qualified and professional staff in quality management. Interviewee 6 stated that "*Qualified staff needs good offers, so if we wish to attract this type of employees, we must offer them attractive incentives. In fact we don't have enough financial recourse help us on that*".

The literature supports these current findings; studies reveal that the success of implementing TQM at HEIs depends largely on qualified staff (Entin, 1992; Aly & Akpovi, 2001; Goldberg, 2002; Jamali et al., 2010). Muhammad et al. (2009) mentioned that good HEIs require good qualified staff in numbers commensurate with the task they have to undertake. Without good staff, these institutions cannot hope to accomplish excellence. On the other hand, the results of a study conducted in Kuwait University revealed that in spite of the availability of all needed resources, faculty members do not see TQM as being fully implemented (Al-Omari & Bon, 2012). For improving quality and achieving its goals, Omani private HEIs have taken a number of steps. One of them is recruiting qualified and experienced staff from all over the world in various disciplines; (Bapoorikar & Shah, 2012). In spite of that, the interviews results demonstrate that private institutions are still suffering from a lack of qualified cadres.

4.4.4.2 Lack of Quality Training

It is very important to provide training before starting any quality management initiative (Hurst, 2002). The interviewees stated that implementing a quality management system requires a highly trained and educated team to ensure the most effective implementation of a quality system within an institution. To ensure success with a quality system requires special training courses for leadership and employees at all levels to gain an understanding of this new system. Despite its accepted importance, 75 percent of the interviewees reported a lack of available quality training opportunities.

The interviewees believed that training is an effective means to address challenging "resistance to change". Interviewee 8 stated "*Naturally, when any new idea appears, people always keep asking - do I have to accept this? In my view, continuous training is the best solution to deal with those who resist changing*". This is supported by the work of Rago (1996) who suggests the major barriers for transforming an organization are the pillars upon which the old culture was built. Employees get comfortable working in a certain way. Once the organization speaks of change, personal struggles begin. Among Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Manochehri et al. (2012) found that suspicion and resistance are the most common reactions to adopting a quality management system.

For improvement of administration quality, leadership in higher education should create conditions that encourage the building of a strategically supportive culture. The contributions of all staff should enable everybody involved to perform to the best of their abilities, in a way that is congruent with institutional quality goals (Trivellas & Dargenidou, 2009). The interviewees believed that training programs could be a bridge to create a quality culture within institutions and among the staff. In contrast, survey results proved that employees were dissatisfied with leadership practice in terms of spreading quality culture among their institutions. Studies have confirmed that quality culture change within an organization depends on the availability of training and development for all employees (Buch & Rivers, 2001). Adebanjo and Kehoe (1998) found that the absence of insistence by senior leadership for training was one element causing a lack of quality culture in British HEIs. These British findings have links to the current research, in which interviewees stated that they have been creating a quality culture to boost performance and to satisfy their staff. However this does not reflect staff beliefs that their institutions were lacking a quality culture.

Six out of the eight interviewees pointed out that a lack of staff knowledge and skills were the most serious problems facing Omani private HEIs. Interviewee 1 stated "*Practitioners must be trained*". When examining the qualitative and quantitative data, both confirmed that training efforts in private HEIs are slow. For instance, the survey results indicated that staff didn't receive adequate training related to quality management. In addition, these programs were not at the desired level, and it was not

explicitly apparent how information gained from such programs can be applied correctly. However, staff are not the only ones facing difficulty with training; even though the interviewees hold top positions, they have limited training opportunities, and their demanding roles can prevent them from attending activities related to quality. Although the literature review suggested several barriers that total quality management implementation faces, inadequate training appears to be one of the major obstacles (Jalal, 2011). Quality studies have confirmed that providing training and education is one essential pillar required for successful TQM implementation (Matejka et al., 1993; Babbar, 1995; Sirvanci, 2004; Lakshman, 2006;Quinn et al., 2009). Perhaps not surprisingly, in Arab countries such as Jordan, Salameh et al. (2011) found that there was substandard training for administrative leadership in the universities and colleges, despite it being essential to the success of implementing a quality management approach.

In Oman, despite the availability of some quality instruction offered from time to time by private HEIs through attending conferences, seminars, and workshops or inviting international experts, training is still not at the required level. Interviewee 3 indicated that "*recently, we give our staff opportunities to enroll in training programs related to quality management. For example, they participate in conferences and workshops. However, we do believe that these programs are insufficient so, we aspire to offer more*". The interviewees determined two main reasons behind the lack of training: Firstly, quality program training is dependent on the availability of funding, therefore, if an institution is financially robust, this will help staff to receive the required quality training within the required time. Perhaps problematically, private HEIs are for-profit institutions, thus, financial motives drive these institutions when they taking any decision. As interviewee 7 opined "*Like other private college in Oman, we don't have more than fees as income; also we don't have any investments*". In fact, most of the interviewees attributed funding as an obstacle in implementing training programs. Interviewee 6 simply stated the following, "*To be honest with you, we don't have enough funding for training and education*". He added "*I don't think any institution is ready to send someone to specialize in quality management in the Western countries, of course, due to highly cost*". The OAAA found that there was no specific budget allocated towards staff development (OAAA, September 2012). As

stated in the literature review, there is little doubt that funding should be made available to provide training in TQM (Hurst, 2002). However, Hurst's study found that there had not been any extra funding made available for faculty members in quality training in American public universities. Moreover, Saiti (2012) stated that the educational system in Greece was suffering from a scarcity of financial resources which prevent funding quality management training. On the other hand, interviewees 3 had a different perspective "*I don't think that a financial issue is a problem, the government provided an appropriate financial support*". Secondly, due to the absence of specialists in quality management, employees are often working on quality management issues in addition to their main tasks. As a result, training, especially involving new people, takes them away from their jobs. They don't have sufficient time to attend training courses, especially outside the institution. Interviewee 2 said "*as a teacher I can't go even for one day and leave my students behind and this situation is applicable to anyone*".

4.4.4.3 Increasing Administrative and Academic Burdens

Interview findings showed that private HEIs suffer from a lack of qualified academic and administrative staff, especially at the senior level. Interviewee 5 mentioned "*We have vacancies belonging to senior management, not filled until now*". This result has also been confirmed by the OAAA's auditing report of private HEIs (OAAA, August 2010; September 2012). Interviewee 4 explained the consequences of a shortage of senior leadership "*lack of staff especially in senior positions means, additional works added to their duties, sometime it is not within their proper domain*". Added to this are the findings by Jalal (2011) who found that managers had too many tasks in Iranian Medical Sciences Universities, which is one major reason that prevented TQM implementation. Also, Cheaupalakit (2002) found that higher education leadership in Thailand are forced to spend most of their time dealing with the routines and complexities of rules and regulations. Basically, senior positions require the fulfillment of a wide variety of duties, thus these many responsibilities tend to prevent them focusing on new initiatives such as quality systems. They believed that their additional burdens were a hindrance in terms of successfully implementing a quality system in their institutions. This issue has prompted OAAA committees to point out in their reports that top leadership has full responsibility for

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all academic affairs in their institution, which is not in line with good management practices (OAAA, August 2013; September 2012).

Furthermore, the results showed that there was a high job turnover rate, particularly among non-Omanis. Interviewee 1 stated that "*Higher staff turnover, especially non-Omani in search of better incentives. That is the biggest challenge we face*". OAAA reports show significant attrition among academic staff as well as administrative staff members. The staff turnover rate reached 45.5% in 2008/2009 in one of the private colleges due to staff leaving for better opportunities at other institutions; such high levels of turnover will potentially have a negative impact on quality (OAAA, March 2011). Studies show that organizations with higher staff engagement levels have a 40% lower turnover rate than organizations with lower levels of staff engagement, and organizations that both involve and enable staff indicate a 54% lower rate of voluntary turnover (Erch, 2012). Bearing this in mind when this study's survey results are examined, a lack of employee participation in decision-making could explain the high levels of staff turnover that the interview results showed. 26.5% of the participants stressed that increasing turnover caused their institutions to be unstable. Interviewee 7 emphasized this by saying "*Once we trained number of employees, they quitting the job. This is, of course, negatively affecting performance of the institution*". On the other hand, these results were not supported by interviewee 8 who said "*we have low staff turnover rate, most staff were working between 5 to 6 years*".

Therefore, as a natural result of staff shortages, existing staff were used to perform quality tasks and other work in addition to their main duties. The staff members are required to act outside their areas of expertise. Interviewee 3 observed that "*we are forced to assign quality tasks to existing staff*". In order to deal with this dilemma, interviewee 5 suggested that release time should be given to those employees. He simply noted "*In case the institutions are doing its quality work by its own current staff, as an example we could cut teaching load by half 50% and allow them to practice quality works in the rest of the time*". Based on interviews, even though there are some responsible groups of people performing tasks in the context of quality, not all understand their tasks well enough and some tasks have not been clearly defined for those who are responsible.

Additionally, staff shortages, especially regarding faculty members, generated another problem within private institutions; that of high teaching loads. Even though in two of the institutions surveyed the teaching staff have relatively low teaching loads, most of the interviewees admitted that there was a lot of pressure on faculty members. Interviewee 1 pointed out "*Due to lack of staff, particularly teaching staff, we forced to have higher teaching load, which, in return, causing dissatisfaction among employees*". In support of this result, Al Harthy (2011) declared that Omani private colleges and universities often employed younger and underqualified staff, and have high student-teacher ratios. As a result, large workloads prevent employee participating in any additional activities, decision-making, and training courses. Interviewee 7 explained the difficulties of underqualified workers, "*In these circumstances, we face a difficulty in getting everybody engaged and involved in understanding the thing has to be done in systematic way of working*". Finally, relating to funding, interviewee 2 concluded that "*There is no doubt that recruiting more people whether administrators or teaching staff is the best solution to reduce burdens, but financial arrangements remain the biggest hurdle*".

4.4.4.4 Focusing on Paperwork

Based on the opinion of four interviewees, the current quality management system involved too much paperwork. After implementing a quality culture within an institution, a link between the quality system and heavy documentation seems to be unavoidable. According to interviewee 8, the ongoing quality practices exist on "paper only", and practical implementation remains elusive. "*Focusing on formalities and leavening its essence*" is the view expressed by interviewee 4. An OAAA committee has recorded the existence of documentation for quality activities within private HEIs, but it is unclear how they relate to quality practices in reality (OAAA, August 2013).

The interviewees considered the excessive attention to detail and documentation as a barrier that hinders the quality journey. Interviewee 8 explained "*The staff want to be allowed to do their jobs without excessive documentations or paperwork*". She added "*The institution is still fighting the paperwork battle, but in many cases the battle being lost*". According to one interviewee, excessive paperwork means extra work, which constitutes additional pressure on staff, and as a result, they often refuse to participate in any acts linked to quality. Not only does it demotivate,

but also time spent on paperwork is time not spent in productive tasks. Interviewee 6 pointed out that "*Focusing should be on people, not paperwork*". He further explained that "*quality activities supposed to concentrate on implementation rather than documentation*". Therefore, the introduction of a quality system in this manner does not achieve institution's objectives, and does not help in improving its performance, or work processes. This finding is in line with the literature, as an example Abd Rahman et al. (2011) identified that increased complex paperwork one of eight challenges for unsuccessful TQM implementation in the services sector. Moreover, part of the literature confirmed that excessive paperwork is one of the most significant causes of work stress. According to Stephen (1993), civilian employees experienced their greatest stress from excessive paperwork. They are fed up with the bureaucracy, red tape and excessive documentation. It requires employees to devote the majority of their time to paperwork. Moreover, excessive paperwork stands as the second most common reason for the high job turnover rate among social workers (n.a., 1985).

4.4.4.5 Ineffectiveness of Academic Affiliation Agreement

As has been mentioned in the introduction chapter, most Omani private institutions are affiliated with international universities; the affiliations are primarily with Western universities in the USA and Europe (MoHE, 2013). Most executives interviewed mentioned that having such academic affiliation agreements with foreign HEIs helps Omanis institutions to achieve their quality goals. This is achieved through frequent supporting visits and feedback reports from affiliated institutions, which supervise the application of a quality management system.

However, the results indicated that there was poor coordination of communication between local institutions and affiliated institutions, especially regarding administrative support, which creates another challenge to private institutions. One issue raised is that the auditing visits by affiliated institutions mainly focuses on academic aspects. Interviewee 3 made the following comment: *"Why those visitors do not allocated a portion of time to cover administrative areas as well?"* This result is supported by the findings of Al Harthy (2011). He concluded that total dependence of the local universities and colleges on the academic affiliation system would not be enough to ensure quality, and will not help Omani private institutions to improve their educational services. He added that academic affiliation with foreign

universities should be considered a method of assisting the development of quality, instead of being the single determinant.

Moreover, the interviewees added that, the responsibilities involved in an affiliation agreement are undefined and unclear which can cause obstacles in fostering genuine partnerships with those institutions. This result is consistent with the observations of the OAAA panel during its auditing process. The OAAA stressed that Omani institutions need to review the nature of their agreements in conjunction with their affiliated institutions to ensure more effective partnerships, particularly, in relation to quality arrangements (OAAA, September 2012; November 2012 November 2013). Based on opinion of interviewee 2 poor coordination between the two institutions could be due to some of the associated foreign institutions being unknown. Related to this point, interviewee 5 elaborated as follows: "*If it is necessary to have an academic affiliation, it supposed to be with institution that has an international reputation and ranking, otherwise, it is better to have such agreement with a local institution*". Interviewee 7 pointed to a third challenge related to academic agreements between international institutions and local institutions. He simply stated "*some quality issues applied in Western countries don't fit with the Omani environment*". Similar findings were discovered by Carroll & Palermo (2006) and Razvi & Carroll (2007). They found that imported non-Omani programs from different countries create a negative consequence for Oman's higher education system. Al Harthy (2011) suggested that finding multiple channels of cooperation with different recognized HEIs worldwide in academic and technical affairs would help the institution to improve itself academically and technically.

4.5 Conclusion

The research has examined the current state of leadership practices in the implementation of a quality management system for administrative affairs at Omani private higher education institutions. The research defined TQM for Omani private HEIs and concluded that seven principles are seen to be important for the successful implementation of TQM. Therefore, the researcher has attempted to compare the quality efforts of leadership to the following TQM principles: Senior Leadership, Strategic Planning, Training Programs, Empowerment & Involvement, Reward & Motivation, Teamwork, and Continuous Improvement.

Chapter IV presented and analyzed the data collected through self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study were presented in accordance with each of the research questions. Furthermore, the data obtained through research questionnaires and interviews were discussed in this chapter; this discussion utilized information from the questionnaires as well as the interviews, and was supported by evidence from the literature.

In order to gather the required data from the 19 private HEIs, the questionnaire's link using SurveyMonkey was distributed via email to nearly 700 of the target sample. Four hundred and sixty eight responses were obtained. Analyzing this data required diverse statistical methods; therefore, many types of statistical analysis were studied to find out the most appropriate analysis needed in each case. A descriptive analysis was used to provide a summary of the survey respondents' demographic information. In addition, in order to compare sample means, and to find out if the means of two sample distributions differed significantly from each other, independent sample t-test analysis was used. One-way INOVA was used to compare the means of two or more groups of data to determine whether the respondents differed significantly. The researcher used an alpha level of 0.05 for all statistical tests. Moreover, eight interviews in total were conducted with senior leadership from selected Omani private HEIs. A thematic approach was used to analyze the interviews; accordingly, the collected data was coded and grouped based on its relevance to leadership practices related to administrative affairs in quality management system.

The analysis of the results of both the questionnaire and interviews revealed several important findings. The results indicated that a quality management system is fundamental for the Omani private higher educational sector, where the majority of the private HEIs perceive this system as an important approach for improving competitiveness, effectiveness, and efficient performance, as well as for continuing to improve services provided to stakeholders.

In connection with the overall state of leadership practices in implementing a quality management system in Omani private HEIs, the analysis results have shown that strategic planning followed by continuous improvement appears to have the highest levels of leadership practices at Omani private HEIs. In addition, agreement with leadership practices related to teamwork, senior leadership, empowerment & involvement, training programs, and reward & motivation came in descending order.

Areas of strength and weakness in leadership practices linked to the seven TQM principles were clarified when analyzing the second research question (section 4.4.2). Through statistical analysis of the levels of agreement with statements in the questionnaire, it became clear that statements that got highest means reflected areas of strength in leadership practices (the highest agreement with leadership practice), whilst, the statements which recorded the lowest means were considered areas of weakness in leadership practices (the least agreement with leadership practice).

Moreover, the findings of the study demonstrated that differences existed in the perceptions of the respondents regarding certain quality practices of leaderships at private HEIs in Oman. A statistically significant difference in administrators and faculty members' perceptions were found in five areas: nationality, age, educational qualification, job classification, and work experience. However, the results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in respondents' perceptions based on gender.

Based on an analysis of the qualitative data, senior leadership interviewees identified five main obstacles to dealing with a quality system. The most frequently found barriers to quality management implementation were, a lack of qualified human resources, a lack of quality training, increasing administrative and academic

workloads, focusing on paperwork, and the ineffectiveness of academic partnerships with foreign HEIs.

These results and findings from this research were beneficial in making the recommendations and conclusions discussed in chapter V. Despite the previously mentioned obstacles of quality management implementation in the Sultanate of Oman, educational leadership can overcome any problems and ensure the provision of high quality services. Thus, the next chapter provides some policy recommendations for best administrative practice in implementing a quality management system.