

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief review background of this research. Then, it extensively discussed the study's findings according to the research questions and their corresponding hypotheses. This discussion was conducted in light of previous studies to enhance the results. Moreover, the chapter also provided the implications of the current research and highlighted the limitations. Finally, the recommendations for future study and the thesis summary were also offered.

5.2 Background of Context

The ultimate objective of this empirical study is to investigate the relationship between organization learning culture, leader-member exchange on the one hand and job satisfaction on the other hand among Omani employees' public sectors. The study also attempted to explore the role of human resources management as a mediating variable and the vital role it plays between leader-member exchange and organizational learning culture on one hand and employees' job satisfaction on the other. It is worth mentioning that the conceptual framework of this study is adapted from previous studies, which are mainly from Western countries such as the United States, Europe countries, Asia and others. However, it is scarce to find studies that examined the variables of this study simultaneously; instead, they were scattered and presented in the previous studies. Thus, this study combined these variables together and examined their effects simultaneously among Omani public sector employees.

Sultanate of Oman is located in West Asia, and it is the third place in terms of area in the Arabian Peninsula. Oman's area is about 309,500 square kilometres, bordered to the north by Saudi Arabia and the West Republic of Yemen and the northeast of the United Arab Emirates. Oman's maritime borders are shared with Iran, Pakistan, UAE and Yemen. Oman governor is Sultan Haithem bin Tariq bin Taymour al Said. Sultanate Oman is ranked 64th among the world's largest economies. However, in 2010 it ranked the United Nations Development Program Oman as the most improved country in the world in development during the previous 45 years. The total number of employees in the Civil Service as of 30/6/2018 was (176,406) distributed among 31 ministries. Oman is classified as a high-income economy and is classified as the 59 most peaceful country in the world according to the World Peace Index. (Ministry of civil service, 2018) This research results in supplying new information to the literature by providing empirical evidence links between the Organization learning Culture, leader-member exchange on human resource management and job satisfaction. Also, it provides the relationship between human resource management with job satisfaction. Therefore, the result of the current research may not be matched to other countries. However, the researcher believes these findings may be compared to countries with similar political characteristics and economic cultures.

5.3 Finding and Discussion

As was previously highlighted, the current research attempted to expand the understanding of the relationship between organization learning culture, leader-member exchange with job satisfaction and the mediating role of human resource management practices among the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman. A number of 768 Omani public sector employees were randomly selected to be the participants of this study. The instruments were administered to these randomly selected participants to gather data on

the predetermined dimensions. The collected data were then explored through the use of Descriptive Statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The findings of this study are in harmony with previous studies that found that leader-member exchange, organization learning culture and human resource management practices are theoretically and statistically related to employees' job satisfaction. The following section provides a details discussion of this research results.

5.3.1 Discussion of Research Question 1:

RQ1: Does Organizational Learning Culture Impact Human Resource Management among the public sector employees in the Sultanate of Oman?

H₀1: There is a positive and significant relationship between organization learning culture and human resource management in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The researcher explored the relationship between organization learning culture and job satisfaction among Omani public sector employees. In answering this research question, the researcher employed structural equation modelling. The structural equation modelling the analysis found that organization learning culture positively predicted employee job satisfaction ($\beta = .70, p = .001$). These findings were consistent with previous studies. As was previously hypothesized, the analysis found that a unit increase in the level of organization learning culture would increase human resource management practices. This finding is consistent with what many previous studies (Ahmed, Khuwaja, Brohi, Othman, & Bin, 2018; Foa & Foa, 2012; Cheung, 2000; Pinho et al., 2014; Haslinda, 2009). According to Haslinda (2009), high-performance organizations learning culture (OLC) in both the private and public sectors significantly affects employees' work engagement and job satisfaction. Organization's people largely

determine its capacity to perform as work engagement. In addition, Kusluvan et al. (2010), Bunch (2007) and Zumrah (2012) also asserted that OLC influences many HRM practices, such as career development or reward systems and the value of training (Bunch 2007). According to these authors, (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Bunch, 2007; Zumrah, 2012), organizational learning culture can play a significant role in enhancing and highlighting the value of HRM practices. Additionally, Aldhuwaini (2013), Egan, Yang, and Bartlett (2004) discovered in their empirical studies that organizational learning culture provides a solid foundation for human resources management. This finding simply described that when an organization adapts learning culture, it would enhance its positive human resource management practices.

5.3.2 Discussion of Research Question 2:

RQ2: Does Leader-Member Exchange impact Human Resource Management among the public sector employees in Sultanate Oman?

H₀2: There is no positive and significant relationship between leader-member exchange and human resource management in the public sector in the sultanate of Oman.

The researcher answered research question two, as was presented in chapter four, by using complete structural equation modelling. In this question, leader-member exchange was used as an exogenous variable, while human resource management practice was the endogenous variable. Theoretically, leader-member exchange refers two-way relationship between leaders and followers in the organization. The analysis found that leader-member exchange was positively ($\beta = .89$, $p = .001$) related to human resource management practices. This finding indicated that when there is leader-member exchange quality in an organization, it enhances its human resource

management practices. This finding was supported by many previous studies (Bowman, 2009; Li, Sanders & Frenkel, 2012; Kang et al., 2011; Ariani, 2012; Gottfredson et al., 2020; Ballinger et al., 2010). Ballinger et al. (2010) found that leader-member exchange quality enhances the organization and the quality of its human resource management practices. According to Ballinger et al. (2010), low LMX employees tend to quit and go to other organizations, compared to those with high LMX. High LMX would reduce operating costs such as recruitment and training costs because high LMX employees do not move out but tend to move on the ladder of promotions. In addition, Li, Sanders and Frenkel (2012) argued that Human Resource Management HRM consistency could affect the relationship between LMX and two work outcomes (engagement and job performance). Moreover, Reid et al. (2008) supported the relationship between LMX and employee commitment, specifically regarding critical organisational results. In a different explanation, the findings indicate that a strong influence of leader-member exchange on human resource management leads to a strong application of human resource management practices and, consequently, the organization's image and employee productivity.

Furthermore, Janssen et al. (2004) also documented the effects of LMX on attitudes and perceptions climate such as job problems, leader supply of resources, leader support of innovation, organizational commitment, overall satisfaction, satisfaction with co-workers, and pay. It was found that leader-member exchange generally plays a significant role in managing conflict interest and resolving the problem among organisation members. Moreover, Bowman (2009) and Chun, Cho and Sosik (2015) also found a strong relationship between LMX and turnover intentions, job search behaviours and in-role and extra-role performance.

Additionally, Li, Sanders and Frenkel (2012) asserted that Human Resource Management (HRM) consistently affects the relationship between LMX and two work outcomes (Engagement and Job Performance). They unequivocally stressed that HRM could strengthen the relationship between LMX engagement and that work engagement affects job performance. It was also argued that the interaction between LMX and HRM affects job performance by mediating the effect of employee work engagement. Reciprocally, LMX and HRM affect employee engagement and performance because both supervisor support and HRM motivate employees to engage in their work. High HRM consistency helps employees reciprocate supervisor behaviour through Superior Performance (Li, Sanders and Frenkel, 2012).

Concerning commitment, previous studies indicated that the effects of leader-member exchange are not limited to employees' job satisfaction and turnover only, but rather they have a significant impact on commitment. According to Reid et al. (2008) and Ariani (2012), LMX fosters employees' commitment, which indicates their satisfaction. Ariani (2012) also reported that LMX was related to commitment through its strong influence on satisfaction with leaders and other members. It can be inferred, therefore, that employee commitment may be a way for them to demonstrate reciprocation or obligation to what their leaders or organization have done for them. This implies that High-Quality Exchange employees who received a large portion of formal and informal benefits would, in return, be dedicated and committed followers (Kang et al., 2011).

5.3.3 Discussion of Research Question 3:

RQ3: Do the Human Resource Management practices impact job satisfaction among the public sector employees in Sultanate Oman?

H₀3: There is a significant relationship between HRM and job satisfaction in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The researcher answered research question three, presented in chapter four, using full structural equation modelling. In this question, human resource management practices were hypothesized to impact job satisfaction among Omani public sector employees, in which HRM has then been treated as exogenous and employees' job satisfaction as an endogenous variable. The analysis found that HRM was positively ($\beta = .78$, $p = .001$) related to Omani public sector employees' job satisfaction. These findings indicated that employees' morale and job satisfaction are fostered when there is positive human resource management practices in an organization. Furthermore, the impact of HRM practices is not limited to employees' job satisfaction per se but also boosts their motivation, commitment, and willingness to improve their work performance. These findings were supported by many previous studies (Mofoluwake and Oluremi, 2013; Sizer, 2008; Rutto, 2012; Basak, 2014; Wang, 2012; Chambers, 2010; Rutto, 2012; Turner et al., 2014; Armstrong, 2003; Stup, 2006; Alnaqbi, 2011; Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011; Anderson, 2008; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Guchaita & Cho, 2015; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). The research analysis results hypothesize that the relationship between human resource management (HRM) and job satisfaction in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman is related positively. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that HRM is positively associated with job satisfaction. Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) also discovered that HRM practices positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Petrescu and Simmons (2008) found that

several HRM practices increase employees' overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with pay. Chow, Haddad and Singh (2007), investigate the impact of nine HRM practices samples of top managers among 140 hotels in San Diego, and the results showed that the hotels in the sample use training and development to bring employees up to an acceptable level of performance, and then rely on allowing the employee a voice to keep them engaged. Usage of HRM varied by hotel type (e.g., resorts vs economy), and the practices had a statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction. Guchaita & Cho (2015) Positive and favourable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction.

These previous studies from different fields proved a positive and significant relationship between human resource practices (training & development, employee participation and compensation) and job satisfaction. Moreover, expanding the human resource management practices fairly and equally between the employees increases their emotions toward the organization, their tranquillity, and loyalty, which leads them to high levels of job satisfaction and their obligation to the organization.

5.3.4 Discussion of Research Question 4:

RQ4: Do human resource management practices play a significant role in mediating between Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction among Omani public sector employees on the other hand?

H₀4: Human resource management practices play a significant role in mediating between Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction (J Sati) among Omani public sector employees on the other hand.

As was reported in the chapter, the findings of this empirical study indicated significant relationships between organization learning culture (OLC) and leader-member exchange (LMX) on the one hand and Omani public sector employees' job satisfaction on the other hand. However, holistically human resource management practices play a pivotal role in mediating between two components of variables. When the HRM variable was introduced to the equation, the magnitudes of the relationships among the model components dramatically increased. The findings of this study showed that organization learning culture and leader-member exchange simultaneously affect human resource management practices and, consequently, employees' job satisfaction. More precisely, the analysis found that OLC positively, significantly and directly predicted employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = .92, p = .001$), while LXM was negatively but significantly correlated with it ($\beta = -.08, p = .001$). However, both OLC and LMX indirectly and positively predicted employees' job satisfaction via HRM ($\beta = .36, p = .001$; $\beta = .71, p = .001$), respectively. Interestingly, HRM was also found to be significantly and positively related to employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = .21, p = .001$). These findings are consistent with many previous empirical studies (Wang, 2012; Rutto, 2012; Turner et al., 2014). In their study, Mofoluwake and Oluremi (2013) found that the employees who were satisfied with their jobs offered better services to the internal staff. In another study, the researchers found a strong relationship between employee satisfaction, product quality, and customer satisfaction (Sizer, 2008). Furthermore, Rutto (2012) proclaimed that if employees expressed positive feelings towards their employers and their job, they performed better at their jobs. Thus, many researchers have contended that if any organization wants to improve its productivity, they need to ensure that all the employees are satisfied with their jobs (Basak, 2014). In contrast, job dissatisfaction among employees leads to absenteeism and higher attrition rates. Job

satisfaction allows employees to become more committed to their jobs, offer high-quality service to their customers (Wang, 2012), improve production (Chambers, 2010), be more willing to continue in their jobs, fulfil all organizational goals, and be more enthusiastic and active to work (Rutto, 2012; Turner et al., 2014).

The employee who was satisfied with his job would adapt to any changes in his work environment and improve his ability to control his work (Chambers, 2010). On the same note, Rutto (2012) affirmed that the professionally-satisfied people lived longer lives compared to the people who were not satisfied with their jobs, as they experienced lesser psychological anxiety, displayed better social adjustment and considered themselves worthier. Sizer (2008) also found that professionally satisfied people led satisfied lives, and the reverse was also true. Lee (2008) mentioned that satisfied employees were more innovative and creative. Thus, it was concluded that if the employees realized their professional needs were satisfied (e.g., job security), they would willingly perform their tasks more creatively. Additionally, if these employees were satisfied at their workplaces, they led happy and satisfied lives. This indicates that job satisfaction affects the balance between the personal and professional lives of the employees (Pinsker, 2012). Also, job satisfaction decreases employee pressure (Mofoluwake et al., 2013). Martin (2006) noted that the workers who enjoyed their jobs were willing to improve their future careers. However, the satisfaction of employees is enhanced by the organization learning culture, leader-member exchange and human resource management practices.

Thus, it was suggested that HRM mediates the relationships between the independent variable (LMX and OLC) and the dependent variables (Job Satisfaction).

The results of the structural modelling equation showed that HRM in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between

the independent variables and job satisfaction (dependent variable). These findings indicated that the employees would feel satisfied in their workplace when HRM mediates the relation of independent variables LMX and OLC with dependent variables.

The mediation effect of HRM is an extremely important outcome that was empirically underestimated in many empirical studies and previous studies, especially in the context of the public sector in Sultanate of Oman and the Middle East in general.

5.3.5 Discussion of Research Question 5:

RQ 5: Is there any significant direct effect of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction among Omani public employees when HRM is considered as a mediator?

H₅: There is no significant direct effect of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction (J Sati) among Omani public employees when HRM is considered as a mediator.

The researcher explored the main variables of this study with HRM, which is considered a mediating variable. In other words, a complete model of structural equation modelling was explored in which the relationship between organization learning culture (OLC) and leader-member exchange LMX on one hand and job satisfaction on the other hand when HRM is considered a mediator. In answering this research question, the researcher employed structural equation modelling as was done for previous analyses. As was previously highlighted, the analysis found that OLC positively, significantly and directly predicted employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = .92, p = .001$), while LXM was negatively but significantly correlated with it ($\beta = -.08, p = .001$). However, both OLC and LMX indirectly and positively predicted employees' job satisfaction via HRM ($\beta = .36, p = .001; \beta = .71, p = .001$), respectively. Interestingly, HRM was also significantly

and positively related to employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = .21, p = .001$). The previous results of the indicators extracted from structural modelling and explained in the previous chapter elaborate on the model's high quality. With these results, the researcher judges that the model has attained the high order of quality required to take its results to answer the research question. However, the results showed a statistically significant relationship among the research sample members and the variable (OLC) on Job Satisfaction. Also, the results showed a statistically significant relationship between the variable (LMX) on Job Satisfaction among the research sample members.

These findings are consistent with many previous empirical studies (Wang, 2012; Rutto, 2012; Turner et al., 2014). In their study, Mofoluwake and Oluremi (2013) found that the employees who were satisfied with their jobs offered better services to the internal staff. In another study, the researchers found a strong relationship between employee satisfaction, product quality, and customer satisfaction (Sizer, 2008). Furthermore, Rutto (2012) proclaimed that if employees expressed positive feelings towards their employers and their job, they performed better at their jobs. Thus, many researchers have contended that if any organization wants to improve its productivity, they need to ensure that all the employees are satisfied with their jobs (Basak, 2014). In contrast, employee dissatisfaction leads to absenteeism and higher attrition rates. Job satisfaction allows employees to become more committed to their jobs, offer high-quality service to their customers (Wang, 2012), improve production (Chambers, 2010), be more willing to continue in their jobs, fulfil all organizational goals, and be more enthusiastic and active to work (Rutto, 2012; Turner et al., 2014).

5.4 The research implication

5.4.1 Theoretical Implications of the Research

Theoretically, this current study investigated the complex relationship between significant variables of employees' job satisfaction. Based on past studies, it was empirically proved that organization learning culture, leader-member exchange and human resource management practices enormously affect employees' job satisfaction. This theoretical framework has been tested globally, and consistent findings have been found across different samples and settings. The results of this study also echoed past studies which enhanced the employed theory. It was found that an organization learning culture, leader-member exchange, and human resource management practices significantly and positively influence employees' job satisfaction. From the theoretical point of view, the significance of the current study's variables would be explicitly clear. It is not an exaggeration to claim that organisational learning culture, leader-member exchange, and human resource management practices greatly foster employees' job satisfaction in Omani public sectors.

This study has extended the understanding of the research objectives in the Arab world countries context, particularly in the Sultanate of Oman. Most of the previous studies that addressed a similar issue have been conducted out of the Arab world countries context, which has different values, principles and cultures. However, this study indicates another piece of evidence to examine the influences of organization learning culture (OLC) and leader-member exchange (LMX) on human resource management (HRM). Moreover, this research explains the relationship between HRM with job satisfaction in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman. The research findings are essential to the research society context since there is a scarce study were measure the current research variables.

5.4.2 Practical Implications of the Study

Concerning the theoretical contributions, this empirical study connected organizational learning culture, leader-member exchange, human resource management practices and employees' job satisfaction. Consistent with enormous previous studies, this study found that improved employee job satisfaction requires efforts on both the organization learning culture and leader-member exchange. The practical implications for the leaders of the organization, who are managing their subordinates and culture and for HRD professionals who develop relevant practices to enhance their employees' job satisfaction are suggested below. Managers and HRD professionals can support employees' job satisfaction by accommodating and supporting their employees' personal development. The employees would also feel satisfied when the more conducive, supportive and encouraging atmosphere. HRD professionals can support managers by providing relevant HR practices and services. However, focusing on only factors such as organization learning culture without considering leader-member exchange and human resource management practices would not yield a good result. Therefore, HR practices should not be implemented alone. Instead, each practice should be delivered and applied concertedly and with a holistic perspective. In other words, enhancing employees' job satisfaction will require an organization learning culture, leader-member exchange and promising human resource management practices. This is by no means an easy task, which is why organizations that are successful in building this type of organization are likely to have a sustainable competitive advantage. Employers of choice achieve this reputation through innovative and compelling HR practices that benefit employees and their organizations. Thus, it is critically important to monitor employees' job satisfaction.

Thus, leaders in the public sectors in the Sultanate of Oman need to adapt their strategies toward human resource management to create a fair program for their employees and increase their morals, motivation, resilience and persistence for high levels of job satisfaction. Human resource management in the public sector should invest more resources in their working schedules, such as family and friendly programs; these efforts let employees feel more satisfaction in their jobs. Finally, human resource management in public sector organizations should pay more attention to the spread the HRM practices to keep the employees in their organizations happy, committed and productive.

5.4.3. Methodological implications of the study

Although this study is cross-sectional, it has significant methodological implications. Unlike many studies in human resources management, especially in Middle Eastern countries and specifically in Oman, where descriptive statistics methods are typically used, the current study employed advanced statistics techniques (CFA and SEM). These methods allow the researcher to precisely determine the magnitudes and directions of relationships between the research components. In addition, using CFA and SEM enable the researcher to monitor the measurement error in each of the components and holistically examine the accuracy and significance of the analysis.

5.4.4 Limitations and Recommendations for future studies

This study has provided useful insights into the development of Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange, HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction. Based on what the researcher explained through the discussion of the research results, the researcher suggested recommendations for future studies.

Future research could undertake to gain a better understanding of the influencing mechanism of Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange on HRM, and HRM influence on Job Satisfaction should include moderating variables.

Moreover, since the current study used a cross-sectional approach, future studies should adopt experimental or longitudinal approaches with comparison groups to fully establish causality. Finally, to increase the generalizability of the present study, more studies in various governmental sectors representing diverse demographic cohorts are needed. More specifically, this study focused on knowledge workers with higher educational levels. The results might vary by the cohorts in different academic levels. Thus, more research with persons of different educational backgrounds is recommended. Future research should continue to examine other contextual and relational factors of the work environment. Also, further research needs to explore more factors that influence HRM Practices and their impact on other new factors to understand the phenomenon under the study holistically.

In addition, whether these findings are, generalizable across the government and private organizations would need to be investigated further with different variables and samples. Moreover, it also encourages testing the proposed research framework in other private organizations to verify the findings and investigate the role of managerial characteristics more deeply since directors often strongly influence employees' day-to-day experiences. In addition, it's interesting to recommend future research to investigate which specific variables moderate the relationship between HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction.

Future research should also consider investigating external factors that influence HRM Practices, such as the Economy, Political Situation and the Organization's Finance Situation, which can play an essential role in Organization and Employee Performance. Also, it is highly advisable to investigate the influence of HRM practices on other factors, such as Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Work Engagement.

Moreover, investigations should also be conducted among employees from the Private Sector and Military Sector in the Sultanate of Oman particularly.

5.5 Summary of the Study

This study has provided essential information and understanding about The relationship between leader-member exchange, organization learning culture and job satisfaction with the mediating role of human resource management practices among the public sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. The exogenous variables of the current study are organization learning culture (OLC) and leader-member exchange (LMX), while the endogenous variable is job satisfaction, and human resource management practices (HRM) is the mediator variable. Specifically, the results of this research showed a positive and significant relationship between organization learning culture (OLC) and human resource management (HRM) in the public sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. In addition, it also shows a positive and significant relationship between leader-member exchange and human resource management. Furthermore, the analysis suggested that HRM significantly and positively predicted job satisfaction while indirect mediator was proved LMX and OLC and job satisfaction via HRM, respectively. All indirect relationships were statistically significant except for the direct relationship between LMX and job satisfaction. As was previously highlighted, analyses found a crucial statistical relationship between OLC and LMX and job satisfaction among the research sampling.

Although the sample size was selected among Omani public sector employees, the findings can be generalized to similar sectors with the same characteristics, whether in Oman or across the Arab peninsula. The current study also represents a guide to decision makers and top management, the general directorates of administrative affairs

and human resource departments in the public organizations in the sultanate of Oman to holistically understand the impact of organizational learning culture and leader-member exchange factors on job satisfaction and the indirect effect of HRM on the job satisfaction.

