
The Reality of Administrative Creativity as an Approach to Achieving Competitive Advantage in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman

Radhiya Sulaiman Al-Habsi (Ph. D) *

*Assistant Professor of Educational Administration at Nizwa
University, RadhiyaAlhabsi@unizwa.edu.om*

Muslim Salem Al-Harasi (Ph. D) *

*Director of Educational Supervision Department - General
Directorate of Education in Al-Dakhiliyah Governorate
Abualsamt96@hotmail.com*

Abstract:

The aim of the current study was to determine the status of administrative creativity as a means to achieve competitive advantage in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. To achieve the study objectives, a descriptive-analytical approach was used, and a questionnaire was employed as a tool for data collection. The study yielded the following results:

The level of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman was found to be "moderate." The study results also revealed statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the responses of the study sample participants attributed to gender and years of experience. However, no statistically significant differences were found in relation to variables such as educational qualification and nature of job. Furthermore, administrative creativity was found to have an impact on predicting the achievement of competitive advantage in the Ministry of Education.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made: The ministry should adopt a strategy for better utilization of its current resources to achieve competitive advantage and the ministry should implement programs and tests to discover the administrative talents and innovations among its employees, either by developing local scales or adapting international tests.

Keywords: Administrative creativity, competitive advantage, Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman.

Received: 25/07/2023

Accepted: 23/09/2023

Proofreading: 30/09/2023

Available online: 31/12/2023

Introduction:

performance. Therefore, organizations strive to empower their resources to the extent that enables them to contribute effectively to innovation and creativity in order to achieve their goals. In the field of education, educational institutions pay great attention to training and qualifying their resources according to the requirements and developments of the era, so that they can play a creative and distinguished role, leading to high-quality educational outcomes.

In the era of globalization, there is an increasing focus on developing the innovative skills of workers and providing them with opportunities to contribute their ideas and innovations to enhance the competitive capabilities of the organization. Additionally, with the rise in education levels and the development of specialized knowledge and skills among individuals, organizations seek them for their importance and competitiveness. These changes have led contemporary organizations to change their perspective on human resources and start considering them as the primary source of competitive capabilities. Consequently, contemporary management has been searching for new concepts and methods for human resource management (Musalam, 2015).

The importance of the need for administrative creativity in educational organizations stems from its significant role in human development. This necessitates those educational institutions be receptive to the dynamics of change and development. The future of nations does not solely depend on the numerical quantity of their workforce but also on providing a distinguished type of administrative workers, i.e., individuals who are creative in various fields, particularly in the educational field, as it is concerned with human development. Accordingly, the orientation of educational organizations towards fostering creativity should not be limited to the introduction of tools and advanced technologies alone. Instead, it should involve making actual changes in the mindset and behavior of workers (Alassaf, 2004).

Administrative creativity is defined as "the ability of managers to change, renew, and introduce new approaches or methods of work characterized by agility, originality, sensitivity to problems, and the use of new and modern means that align with the surrounding environment, achieve benefits, meet societal needs, and effectively and efficiently achieve the goals of the organization in different ways" (Abu Jamea, 2009). The organizational environment plays a vital role in providing the necessary climate and resources for creativity. A flexible administrative system and an environment characterized by trust relationships and a spirit of collaborative teamwork encourage creative behavior among employees (Al-Omyan, 2002).

Several researchers have addressed the topic of managerial creativity and competitive advantage. One of the studies that examined managerial creativity is the study conducted by Abu Hamdi (2019), which aimed to identify the reality of managerial creativity in the Directorate of Education in Aqaba Governorate, Jordan, from the perspective of its employees. The researcher used a descriptive survey method and constructed a questionnaire consisting of 24 items. The study sample consisted of department heads and employees working in the Directorate of Education in Aqaba. The results indicated that the reality of managerial creativity in the Directorate of Education in Aqaba, from the perspective of its employees, was of moderate degree. There were no significant differences in the perspectives of the study sample regarding the variables of job position and gender.

Another study conducted by Yalabik et al. (2015) aimed to explore the relationship between interaction in the work environment and managerial creativity in service organizations. The study used a descriptive-analytical method and was conducted on a sample of 375 employees in service organizations. The study revealed a positive impact of internal relationships within organizations on the degree of managerial creativity. It also found a statistically significant relationship between the work environment and the interaction and

*Corresponding Author: | Email: RadhiyaAlhabsi@unizwa.edu.om, Abualsamt96@hotmail.com

Copyright©2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 (CC BY-NC 4.0) International License

engagement in work among individuals with high levels of managerial creativity.

Abual Rahman (2014) conducted a study to examine the reality of practicing managerial creativity in the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The study adopted a descriptive method, and the study population consisted of all employees in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, totaling 236 individuals. A random sample of 179 administrators was taken. The study used a questionnaire as a data collection tool and ensured its validity and reliability. The results showed a high degree of overall managerial creativity practice in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Ababneh and Al-Shaqran (2013) aimed to assess the degree of managerial creativity practiced by educational leaders in the Directorates of Education in Irbid Governorate, Jordan, from their perspective. The study found that the degree of managerial creativity practiced by educational leaders in the Directorates of Education in Irbid Governorate was of moderate degree in the areas of adopting and encouraging creativity and applying creativity as a whole. However, the domain of work environment and methods received a high degree of practice. The results indicated no statistically significant differences in all areas of managerial creativity practice by educational leaders in the Directorates of Education in Irbid Governorate, and as a whole, due to the variables of work experience, directorate, and job title.

The Shelton (2010) study aimed to investigate the relationships between creativity, openness, autonomy, organizational justice, actual organizational misbehavior, and potential organizational misbehavior. The study sample consisted of 155 adults from various professions who were selected through contact with two regions. A questionnaire was used as a research tool, and the results indicated a positive relationship between openness, creativity, organizational justice, and autonomy. However, the relationship with actual organizational misbehavior and potential organizational misbehavior varied.

The Alagala (2009) study aimed to explore the reality of administrative creativity and its relationship with the performance of managers working in the ministries of the Gaza sector. The study employed a descriptive method, and the results revealed that managers in the Gaza ministries possessed high levels of distinct creative abilities. Organizational variables contributed to creating an innovative climate. The study also indicated that the reality of administrative creativity and job performance in the Gaza ministries, in general, was acceptable. However, the performance evaluation process in these ministries was not carried out effectively and did not serve the employees and the ministries adequately.

The Abu Jamea (2009) study aimed to investigate the institutional relationship and administrative creativity as perceived by different managerial levels in the Jordanian Ministry of Education. The study used a descriptive method, and the findings showed that the prevailing degree of administrative creativity among the ministry's employees was moderate. There were no statistically significant differences in possessing creative abilities among employees based on gender. However, there were statistically significant differences in possessing creative abilities based on educational qualification and training courses.

The Cheng et al. (2012) study aimed to examine the relationship between organizational creativity and

organizational performance in high-tech manufacturing companies in China. The study utilized a questionnaire and included a sample of 300 managers from participating companies. The findings revealed a positive and moderate relationship between organizational creativity and organizational performance. The study also identified innovation and organizational learning as key factors influencing organizational creativity.

The Al-Rajhi (2021) study focused on building a proposed framework to uncover the contribution of digital leadership in achieving competitive advantage in Saudi universities, in light of the principles of the productive university. The research provided a procedural framework to guide Saudi universities and direct their audience technically in achieving competitive advantage. It emphasized the importance of developing leadership in line with the new university system, which grants universities independence and motivates them to explore new sources of funding. The study employed a descriptive analytical approach, which was deemed suitable for the research topic. The findings emphasized that competitive advantage is one of the main justifications for transforming a university into a productive one, without undermining its role in fulfilling its core functions. The study also highlighted the need to develop digital infrastructure and increase financial resources through smart investment to achieve competitive advantage.

The study of Alfuqaha (2012) aimed to investigate the role of adopting strategies of excellence in learning and teaching in achieving sustainable competitive advantage for higher education institutions. The study followed a systematic survey and descriptive approach through a review of the theoretical literature and the adoption of An-Najah National University as a case study due to its unique experience in excellence in education and learning. The study found several results, including a strong correlation between adopting strategies of excellence in learning and teaching and achieving sustainable competitive advantage for higher education institutions by providing students with a distinctive educational experience, supporting faculty members to perform according to desired quality standards, providing a supportive learning environment that promotes diversity and creativity, and designing educational activities that enhance creativity and critical thinking for all stakeholders in the educational process. The study also provided several recommendations, including the necessity of adopting strategies of excellence in learning and teaching, rewarding excellence at the national level, and continuous monitoring of the competitive advantage criteria for institutions and their measurement.

Abu Shamma (2018) conducted a study on administrative creativity and competitive advantage. The study aimed to examine the reality of administrative creativity and its impact on achieving competitive advantage in public service institutions in Palestine from the perspective of employees. The results indicated a high degree of interest in attracting, recruiting, promoting, and motivating creative employees in public service institutions in Palestine. The study also found a moderate degree of seeking competitive excellence in these institutions. It indicated the absence of statistically significant differences at a significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in the overall score of the tool based on the variable of employees' gender, while statistically significant differences were found at a significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in administrative creativity and its impact on achieving competitive advantage based on the variable of

employees' academic qualification in favor of Ph.D. holders. The study didn't find statistically significant differences at a significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in the overall score of the tool based on age and years of service in public institutions, but it found statistically significant differences at a significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in administrative creativity and its impact on achieving competitive advantage based on job title.

Al-Nashmi and Al-Dais (2017) conducted a study to identify the relationship between administrative creativity and achieving competitive advantage in private universities in Yemen. The researchers used the descriptive-analytical method to answer the study's questions and test its hypotheses. A questionnaire was applied, and the results showed a correlation between three dimensions of administrative creativity (innovative climate, creative behavior, and creativity implementation) and achieving competitive advantage in private universities in Yemen.

Assaf (2015) conducted a study to examine the reality of administrative creativity as an approach to achieving competitive advantage in higher education institutions from the perspective of employees. The study aimed to identify statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the mean scores of the sample individuals' assessment of the reality of administrative creativity as an approach to achieving competitive advantage attributed to variables such as academic qualification, gender, and years of service. The study also aimed to develop a strategy for managing administrative creativity as an approach to achieving competitive advantage in higher education institutions. The results showed statistically significant differences in the overall level of the sample individuals' opinions about the reality of administrative creativity attributed to the variables of academic qualification and years of service.

Commenting on previous studies and the current study:

- The current study is similar to the studies conducted by Assaf (2015), Al-Nashmi and Al-Dais (2017), and Abu Shamma (2018) in addressing the variables of administrative creativity and competitive advantage.

- It agrees with the studies of Abu Hamdi (2019), Al-Ajla (2009), Abu Jamea (2009), and Ababneh and Ashaqqaran (2013) in considering administrative creativity as an independent variable. It also shares similarities with the study of Al-Muqaddamah (2013) and Alfuqaha (2012) in focusing on competitive advantage as a dependent variable.

- The current study employed a descriptive-analytical methodology and used a questionnaire as a research tool, similar to the studies of Al-Nashmi and Al-Dais (2017), Al-Hawaila (2009), Al-Ajla (2009), Abu Jamea (2009), Al-Nugari (2000), Al-Suwaidi (2013), Ababneh and Ashaqqaran (2013), and Shelton (2010).

- It differs from the study conducted by Alfuqaha (2012) in terms of the research methodology, as the current study followed a systematic survey and descriptive approach through a review of the theoretical literature and a case study of An-Najah National University.

- The current study shares similarities in terms of the sample type with the studies of Al-Ajla (2009), Abu Jamea (2009), Assaf (2015), Abu Shamma (2018), Yalabik et al. (2015), Abdurrahman (2014), and Abu Hamdi (2019) as it included employees in the Ministry of Education.

- It differs from the study conducted by Al-Ajla (2009) and Ababneh and Ashaqqaran (2013) in terms of the study sample, as their tools were applied to managers and leaders at different administrative levels.

The current study benefited from previous studies in constructing the theoretical framework, formulating the research problem and questions, developing and refining the study questionnaire, determining the sample individuals, identifying appropriate procedures, selecting suitable statistical methods, but it distinguishes itself by presenting and analyzing previous attempts in the fields of research related to administrative creativity and competitive advantage. This study contributes to enriching the practical aspect by addressing the reality of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education. Additionally, this study is unique in that it is the first study - to the knowledge of the researchers - conducted in the Ministry of Education.

Problem Statement and Research Questions:

Administrative creativity is characterized by a set of necessary skills that must be adopted to work towards achieving the organization's goals and objectives in a more creative and effective manner, thereby achieving a competitive advantage in the organization's overall performance. These skills include communication and collaboration, problem-solving, motivating creativity, and openness to change. However, the results of several studies conducted in this field indicate the existence of a performance gap that necessitates its study and investigation, such as the study conducted by Al-Masrouriyeh (2019), which recommended a set of developmental measures, including improving and developing human resource management processes at the Ministry of Education.

The future vision of Oman 2040 also includes an important strategic direction, which is "comprehensive education, sustainable learning, and scientific research leading to a knowledgeable society and competitive national capabilities" (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, 2020). This confirms the importance of examining and identifying the reality of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education as a means to achieve a competitive advantage in its institutional performance.

In light of the above, the current study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current state of administrative creativity in achieving a competitive advantage in the Ministry of Education in Oman?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between the mean scores at a significance level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$) in the study sample's assessments of the reality of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in Oman, attributed to variables such as gender, educational qualification, years of experience, and nature of work?
3. What is the potential for predicting the achievement of a competitive advantage through administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in Oman?

Study Objectives:

The current study aims to:

1. Determine the current state of administrative creativity in achieving a competitive advantage in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman.

2. Explore whether there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores, at a significance level of $(0.05 \geq \alpha)$, in the study sample's assessments of the reality of administrative creativity in achieving a competitive advantage in the Ministry of Education in Oman, attributed to variables such as gender, educational qualification, years of experience, and nature of work.
3. Investigate the potential for predicting the achievement of a competitive advantage through administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in Oman.

Study Significance:

The current study is expected to achieve theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretical Significance: This study is among the first studies - to the researcher's knowledge - that investigate the relationship between administrative creativity as an input for achieving a competitive advantage in the Ministry of Education. This topic is relatively new and not well-defined in the educational field, The current study is expected to provide information about the dimensions and principles of administrative creativity, which will help the ministry enhance its reality in achieving institutional excellence and It may enrich the local, Arab, and international literature in the field of administrative creativity for achieving a competitive advantage.

Practical Significance:

The study may provide accurate data and information about the level of administrative creativity among department managers in the Ministry of Education, which can be utilized to enhance the ministry's performance and achieve a higher degree of competitive advantage, It is expected that this study will open up fertile ground for researchers to conduct further studies on administrative creativity for achieving a competitive advantage, addressing other dimensions not covered in the current study and The recommendations and proposals resulting from the study can guide senior leadership in the Ministry of Education to conduct a comprehensive review of the human resource management system, and to implement development in the mechanisms of recruitment, training, and qualification of employees, and to enhance their skills to enable them to lead their departments towards achieving a competitive advantage.

Study Boundaries: This study focused on the field of administrative creativity as an approach to achieving competitive advantage in its dimensions: employee attraction and retention, adoption and nurturing of administrative creativity, and planning and policy-making, it was conducted on all employees of the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman, current field study was limited to the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman and it was conducted in the academic year (2022/2023).

Study Terminology: Administrative Creativity: It refers to the set of procedures, processes, and behaviors that improve the overall climate in an institution by encouraging employees to solve problems and make decisions in a more creative and unconventional way of thinking (Al-Awwad, 2002, p.41).

Competitive Advantage: Al-Salami (2001) defines it as "the competitive capability, which is the skill, technique, or distinctive resource that enables an organization to produce

values and benefits for customers that exceed what its competitors offer. It demonstrates its uniqueness and differentiation from the competitors from the customers' perspective, as they accept this difference and distinctiveness, which provides them with more benefits and values that surpass what other competitors offer."

The current study defines administrative creativity as the Ministry of Education's ability to innovate methods and ideas in attracting and retaining employees, fostering administrative creativity, and planning and formulating policies that can motivate employees to invest their energies and talents to achieve outstanding performance. This can be measured by examining the responses of the study sample regarding the dimensions of the current study and its demographic variables.

Study Methodology:

The current study adopted a descriptive research methodology, relying on the analytical approach to study and analyze the dimensions of administrative creativity in achieving competitive advantage. This methodology is considered the most suitable for achieving the objectives of the current study by understanding and accurately describing the elements of the problem or phenomenon, collecting facts and information about it, reporting them as they exist in reality, expressing the results in a quantifiable manner that can be interpreted, and consequently developing improvement procedures and suggesting future research (Al-Mahmudi, 2019).

Study Population and Sample:

The study population consists of all employees in the Ministry of Education, totaling 2,000 male and female employees. A simple random sample was taken, representing the original population and acceptable for scientific research purposes. The sample size was 257 employees, accounting for 12.9% of the total study population. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study sample in relation to the total study population according to its variables.

Table 1
Distribution of the study sample according to gender, job title, years of experience, and nature of work of the employees.

Variable	Level/Category,	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	87	%5.38
	Female	139	%5.61
	Total	226	%100
Academic Qualification	Bachelor's degree or below	121	%5.53
	Master's degree or above	105	%5.46
	Total	226	%100
Years of Experience	Less than 7 years	101	%7.44
	7 -years or more	125	%3.55
	Total	226	%100
Nature of Work of Employees	Administrative	137	%6.60
	Technical	89	%4.39
	Total	226	%100

Analysis of the Study Table (1) indicates that the distribution of the sample individuals across the four variables was relatively close, suggesting homogeneity among the categories of each variable.

Study Instrument: To answer the study questions, the researcher developed a study instrument, which is a questionnaire consisting of a single Dimension that measures the reality of administrative creativity as an input for achieving competitive advantage in its dimensions: employee attraction and retention, adoption and nurturing of administrative creativity, and planning and policy-making. This study instrument draws on the works of Assaf (2015), Al-Nashmi and Al-Dais (2017), Abu Shamma (2018), and Abu Hamdi (2019), which were conducted in governmental and non-governmental institutions. The Likert five-point scale (very high, high, moderate, low, and very low) was adopted, with corresponding weighted values (5, 4, 3, 2, 1).

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument: To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was initially presented to a group of experts specializing in educational management from various Omani and non-Omani universities, as well as employees from the Ministry of Education. The opinions of the experts were taken into account to finalize the scale. To assess the construct validity of the instrument, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated, resulting in a value of 87.4, indicating high validity. The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 97.3, indicating high reliability. Therefore, all dimensions were considered valid for the purposes of the study.

Construct Validity:

To extract the construct validity indicators of the scale, correlation coefficients were obtained between each item and the total score, between each item and its corresponding dimension, and between the dimensions themselves and the total score, using a survey sample of 40 employees outside the study sample. The correlation coefficients ranged between 0.48 and 0.86 for the items with the overall instrument, between 0.44 and 0.93 for the items with their respective dimensions. Table 2 illustrates these correlations.

Table 2

Correlation coefficients between the item, total score, and corresponding dimension

Paragraph Number	Correlation Coefficient with Dimension	Correlation Coefficient with Instrument	Paragraph Number	Correlation Coefficient with Dimension	Correlation Coefficient with Instrument	Paragraph Number	Correlation Coefficient with Dimension	Correlation Coefficient with Instrument
1	**92	**79	8	**80	**55	18	**54	**59
2	**86	**78	9	**75	**70	19	**86	**59
3	**76	**70	10	**82	**58	20	**59	**57
4	**86	**59	11	**86	**78	21	**80	**55
5	**88	**83	12	**80	**55	22	**78	**47
6	**89	**74	13	**60	**57	23	**75	**70
7	**80	**55	14	**80	**55	24	**86	**59
			15	**90	**79	25	**86	**78
			16	**88	**83			
			17	**89	**74			

* Statistically significant at the significance level of (0.05). ** Statistically significant at the significance level of (0.01).

Table (2) shows that all correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant. The correlation coefficient between the dimension and the total score was calculated, as well as the correlation coefficients between the dimensions themselves. The following table illustrates this.

Table 3

Correlation coefficients between the dimensions and the total score

	Employee Attraction and Retention	Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity	Planning and Policy-Making
Employee Attraction and Retention	1		
Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity	*.381	1	
Planning and Policy-Making	**610	*.541	1

* Statistically significant at the significance level of (0.05). ** Statistically significant at the significance level of (0.01).

Table (3) shows that all correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant, indicating an appropriate level of construct validity.

Reliability of the Study Instrument: To ensure the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated, and Table (4) illustrates the results.

Table 4

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of Internal Consistency

Dimensions	Internal Consistency
Employee Attraction and Retention	0.92
Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity	0.91
Planning and Policy-Making	0.94

Table (4) shows that the values of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all dimensions of the study instrument (questionnaire) ranged from (0.91 to 0.94), indicating a good level of stability. This indicates that the instrument is valid for the purposes of the current study.

Statistical Methods Used: After data collection through the electronic questionnaire, the data was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results were extracted and used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The Likert five-point scale was used to measure the level of administrative creativity for achieving competitive advantage. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the study instrument, and Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure the consistency in the study instrument. Additionally, an independent samples t-test was used to examine the differences between two independent samples to answer the second question. To answer the third question, the study employed multiple linear regression analysis.

Study Results and Discussion: In this section, the study presents and discusses the results in relation to its research questions. The study relied on the mean and standard deviations of the variables in its model to determine the degree of agreement. To determine the scale level, five levels were identified, as shown in Table (5) below.

Table 5
Model for Determining Scale Levels of the Items

Range	Level
4.20 - 5	Very high
3.40 - less than 4.19	High
2.60 - less than 3.39	Moderate
1.80 - less than 2.59	Low
1 - less than 1.79	Very low

The current study also employed the t-test to detect differences between two independent groups and conducted analysis of variance (ANOVA) to answer the second research questions. Regarding the third question, the study relied on simple regression analysis.

Research Question 1: The first research question of the study asks: What is the current status of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman? To answer this question, the researchers calculated the means and standard deviations for each dimension of the Dimension of the current status of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally, the rankings for each dimension were determined. Then, the researchers calculated the means and standard deviations for the responses of the study sample individuals to the items within each dimension. Table (6) illustrates these results.

Table 6

Means and standard deviations of the study sample individuals' responses regarding the measurement of the current status of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman.

Number	Domains	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level
1	Employee Attraction and Retention	3.08	0.962	1	Moderate
2	Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity	2.81	0.985	3	Moderate
3	Planning and Policy-Making	2.82	0.973	2	Moderate
Overall Mean of administrative creativity Dimension		2.89	0.980		Moderate

From Table (6), it is evident that the overall mean of the current status of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman is 2.89 with a standard deviation of 0.980. This falls under the average level. At the dimension level, all dimensions are classified as average. The dimension of Employee Attraction and Retention ranked first,

followed by Planning and Policy-Making, and finally the dimension of Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity. This average result can be attributed to the lack of a clear and declared strategy within the ministry that focuses on developing operational efficiency. There is also a deficiency in providing support and encouragement to individuals with creative initiatives to enhance competitiveness among employees. Furthermore, there is a lack of emphasis by immediate supervisors on investing in employees' creative talents or retaining them. This average result may also be attributed to the limited budgets allocated to creativity and innovation within the ministry or the absence of incubators to support innovators and creative ideas.

After presenting the results related to the first research question, the presentation and discussion of the results for each dimension separately are as follows:

Dimension 1: Employee Attraction and Retention

Table 7

Study Sample Individuals' Responses to the Dimension of Employee Attraction and Retention.

Number	Paragraph	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level
1	The ministry strives to have exceptional and valuable human resources.	3.40	1.174	2	High
2	The ministry conducts studies and evaluations of its human resources based on their strategic importance.	3.11	1.170	3	Moderate
3	The ministry continuously seeks to acquire efficient human resources.	3.07	1.198	4	Moderate
4	The ministry possesses human resources that are not available in similar institutions.	3.45	1.170	1	High
5	The ministry has a system that encourages the recruitment of exceptional and creative talents.	2.63	1.324	7	Moderate
6	The ministry works on enhancing its human resources as a strategic strength.	2.88	1.202	6	Moderate
7	The ministry has exceptional human resources that are difficult to replicate.	3.04	1.032	5	Moderate

Table (7) reveals that Paragraph (4) "The ministry possesses human resources that are not available in similar institutions" has an arithmetic mean of (3.45), while Paragraph (1) "The ministry strives to have exceptional and valuable human resources" has an arithmetic mean of (3.40), indicating a high level. The remaining paragraphs are classified as average. Paragraph (7) "The ministry has a system that encourages the recruitment of exceptional and creative talents" is rated the lowest with an average of (2.63). This may be attributed to shortcomings in the implementation of the ministry's criteria for attracting efficient human resources and the absence of a system that encourages the recruitment of exceptional and creative talents, contrary to the perspective of the study sample. This may also be justified by many

employees seeking early retirement or exploring other job opportunities.

Dimension 2: Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity

Table 8

Study Sample Individuals' Responses to the Dimension of Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity.

Number	Paragraph	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level
8	The ministry adopts strategies that contribute to the development of operational efficiency.	2.97	1.022	2	Moderate
9	The ministry works on providing all the requirements that contribute to and support its performance excellence.	2.82	1.102	4	Moderate
10	The ministry places great importance on innovative and creative ideas presented by its employees.	2.67	1.111	8	Moderate
11	The ministry promotes creative competition among its administrative units.	2.64	1.147	9	Moderate
12	The ministry is committed to applying information technology and computerizing its administrative systems.	3.62	1.026	1	High
13	The ministry continuously strives to develop innovative and qualitative administrative mechanisms.	2.84	1.108	3	Moderate
14	The ministry seeks, through external entities, to provide platforms and incubators for administrative creativity and talents.	2.68	1.126	7	Moderate
15	The ministry adopts a strategy that ensures better utilization of available human resources.	2.73	1.124	6	Moderate
16	The ministry flexibly invests its resources in line with the requirements and surrounding conditions.	2.79	1.165	5	Moderate
17	The ministry rewards creative and talented employees.	2.35	1.126	10	Low

Table 8 shows that Paragraph (12) "The ministry is committed to applying information technology and computerizing its administrative systems" has a high level with an arithmetic mean of (3.62), while the remaining paragraphs have an average level ranging from (2.97) to (2.64) for Paragraph (8) "The ministry adopts strategies that contribute to the development of operational efficiency" and Paragraph (11) "The ministry promotes creative competition among its administrative units" respectively. However, Paragraph (17)

"The ministry rewards creative and talented employees" ranks last with a low level and an average of (2.35). The researchers attribute this to the lack of requirements that contribute to and support the innovative and creative ideas presented by the employees, which would enhance creative competition among the administrative units. The ministry relies on traditional administrative mechanisms and methods in its operations and procedures, and this may also be attributed to the scarcity of projects and cooperative programs with external entities in providing platforms for administrative creativity and talents.

Dimension 3: Planning and Policy Development

Table 9

Study Sample Individuals' Responses to the Dimension of Planning and Policy Development.

Number	Paragraph	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level
18	The ministry allocates a special annual budget to support creativity and innovation.	2.75	1.070	5	Moderate
19	The ministry's mission emphasizes the adoption of everything that is creative and innovative.	2.79	1.082	4	Moderate
20	The ministry is committed to developing creative administrative mechanisms to facilitate service recipients.	2.94	1.056	3	Moderate
21	The ministry strives to excel in the application of information technology.	3.31	1.076	1	Moderate
22	The ministry continuously seeks to introduce and develop quality and innovative programs.	2.95	1.080	2	Moderate
23	The ministry works on preparing plans to develop creative and talented individuals from its human resources.	2.69	1.117	6	Moderate
24	The ministry implements programs and tests to discover administrative talents and innovations.	2.45	1.251	7	Low

The results in Table 9 indicate that the dimension of planning and policy development in all paragraphs had a weak level. The paragraphs ranged from Paragraph 21 "The ministry strives to excel in the application of information technology" with a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 1.076, to Paragraph 23 "The ministry works on preparing plans to develop creative and talented individuals from its human resources" with a mean of 2.69 and a standard deviation of 1.117. Furthermore, Paragraph 24 "The ministry implements programs and tests to discover administrative talents and innovations" had a weak level with a mean of 2.45 and a standard deviation of 1.24. The researchers attribute this to the inadequacy of the allocated budget to support creativity and innovation. It can also be explained by the absence of creative thinking among some officials in developing operational plans to achieve competitiveness, the limited application of advanced information technology by some administrative units in the

ministry in preparing plans to develop creative and talented individuals from its human resources, and the lack of programs and tests implemented by the ministry to discover administrative talents and innovations from the perspective of the study sample individuals.

Question 2: Are there statistically significant differences between the mean values at a significance level of $\alpha (0.05 \geq \alpha)$ in the estimates of the study sample individuals regarding the reality of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman attributed to variables such as gender, educational qualification, years of experience, and job nature of the employee?

Table 10

Statistically significant differences in the reality of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman attributed to variables such as gender, educational qualification, years of experience, and job nature of the employee.

Variable	Mean		Value of Levene's Test for Homogeneity	T-value	Significance Level
Gender	Male	3.09	0.000	2.198	0.013
	Female	2.78			
Academic Qualification	Bachelor's degree or below	2.96	0.007	1.09	0.275
	Master's degree or above	2.82			
Years of Experience	Less than 7 years	2.02	0.199	3.61	0.000
	7 -years or more	2.95			
Nature of Work of Employees	Administrative	2.97	0.007	1.72	0.086
	Technical	2.77			

From Table (10), it is evident that the significance level for Levene's test is less than 0.05 for all variables. Therefore, the homogeneity assumption is not met, indicating that there is variation between groups. Thus, we rely on the second row of the table, "Equal variances not assumed," and use the t-test to examine the statistical significance of the administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman for the variables: gender, educational qualification, and job nature. The results indicate that the significance level for gender is 0.013, which is less than 0.05, suggesting statistically significant differences. This means that the gender variable has an impact on the administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The mean for males is 3.09, indicating that males have a higher level of interest in the need for a clear and declared strategy to support and invest in employees' creative initiatives. They also perceive the ministry's

budgets for creativity and innovation as inadequate and look forward to the existence of incubators to support innovators and creative ideas, perhaps due to their extensive exposure and observation of the significant efforts in other societal institutions in the field of nurturing talent and focusing on human resources.

Table (10) also shows that the statistical significance level for years of experience is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant differences in the administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman attributed to years of experience. Referring to the mean values, it becomes clear that the mean for "7 years or more" is in favor of more experienced individuals. This can be attributed to the fact that the individuals with greater experience in the study sample have clearer attitudes and beliefs about the reality of administrative creativity in the ministry. They also have higher ambitions to improve that reality if the ministry intends to achieve a competitive advantage.

Furthermore, Table (10) shows that the statistical significance level for educational qualification is 0.275 and for job nature is 0.086, both of which are higher than 0.005 for the two variables. Therefore, we can conclude that there are no statistically significant differences in the administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman attributed to educational qualification and job nature. This indicates that there is no impact of educational qualification and job nature on the level of administrative creativity in the ministry. This may be attributed to the convergence among the ministry's employees in their perception of the ministry's plans and policies in adopting and supporting employees to achieve a competitive advantage through the dimensions of administrative creativity.

Question 3: What is the possibility of predicting the achievement of a competitive advantage through administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman?

A linear regression analysis was conducted to predict the possibility of achieving a competitive advantage through administrative creativity. Table (11) below presents the results of the analysis:

Table 11

Simple regression analysis to predict the possibility of achieving a competitive advantage through administrative creativity.

Variable	Competitive Advantage Achievement Dimension			ANOVA	
	R Correlation Coefficient	Squared Correlation Coefficient	Sig Level of Significance	F	Sig Level of Significance
Administrative Creativity	0.892	0.796	0.000	289.3	0.00

It is evident from Table (11) that the level of significance for predicting the achievement of competitive advantage through

administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman is equal to (0.000), which is less than (0.05). The Pearson correlation coefficient is (0.892), and the statistical significance value for the correlation between them in the ANOVA column is (0.00). This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between them, and it is a strong positive correlation. This confirms the significance of the regression. To determine the reason for the impact of this prediction, it is necessary to test which dimensions of administrative creativity were the cause.

Table 12

Results of testing the impact of dimensions of administrative creativity on achieving competitive advantage.

Dimension	B Value	Beta Value	T Value	Statistical Significance (sig)
Constant	0.877		11.801	0.000
Employee Attraction and Retention	0.031	0.041	0.606	0.545
Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity	0.107	0.145	2.251	0.025
Planning and Policy Development	0.548	0.736	13.014	0.000

The results from Table (12) indicate that the statistical significance value for Employee Attraction and Retention is (0.545), which is greater than 0.05. This means that it does not have a significant impact on predicting the achievement of competitive advantage. However, the results show that the statistical significance value for Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity is (0.025), and for planning and Policy Development is (0.000). These values are less than 0.05, confirming their significance. The predictive value for Planning and Policy Development in achieving competitive advantage is (0.736), which is the highest, while the predictive value for Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity is (0.145), which is the lowest. This can be justified by the strong relationship between the level of administrative creativity and the achievement of competitive advantage. As the level of administrative creativity increases, the chances and possibilities of achieving competitive advantage for the Ministry of Education increase. Additionally, the contribution of the Planning and Policy Development dimension in achieving administrative creativity is greater than the other dimensions, as all efforts, procedures, and operations are implemented through operational plans, programs, and projects that are derived from the strategic plan and reflect the work policies of the ministry.

Recommendations: To enhance the level of administrative creativity in the Ministry of Education for achieving competitive advantage, the current study recommends the following:

Regarding the Employee Attraction and Retention dimension:

- Implement a performance mastery system to measure individual performance and enhance the efficiency of human resources in the ministry.
- Improve the quality of services provided by the ministry to its employees, which enhances employee trust.
- Develop a system that encourages attracting exceptional and creative talents.
- Foster a sense of belonging among employees through the preservation of human resources competencies.
- Link employee productivity to incentives to encourage them to continue their dedication.

Regarding the second dimension: Adoption and Nurturing of Administrative Creativity:

- The ministry should adopt modern strategies to enhance the efficiency of procedures and achieve high performance quality.
- Provide all necessary requirements that contribute to and support the exceptional performance of its employees, thereby having a competitive human resource pool.
- Provide financial and technical support for innovative and creative ideas presented by ministry employees.
- Implement a competition to encourage creative competition among administrative units within the ministry, in order to motivate talented and creative employees.
- Seek opportunities for collaboration with external entities to provide platforms and incubators for administrative creativity and talent.
- The ministry should adopt a long-term strategy to optimize the investment of its current resources in order to achieve competitive advantage.
- Explore new avenues to harness the energy and efforts of employees in line with current circumstances and future visions.
- Encourage employees to take initiative and capitalize on available opportunities to enhance competitiveness.
- Adopt a long-term strategy to develop the reality of administrative creativity as a means to achieve competitive advantage.

Regarding the third dimension: Planning and Policy Development:

- Allocate a specific annual budget within the ministry to support talented and creative individuals.
- Develop innovative administrative mechanisms to enhance the services provided to employees and external beneficiaries.
- Utilize information technology in planning its developmental programs and projects.
- Prepare strategic and operational plans to develop the skills of creative and talented employees.
- Implement programs and tests to discover the administrative talents and innovations of its employees, whether through developing local tests and measures or adapting global assessments.

Proposed Research Topics:

- Developing organizational creativity in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman in light of the Vision 2040.

- Proposed strategy for talent management of employees in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Establishing national measures to discover the administrative talents and innovations of employees in the Ministry of Education.

References:

- Abdul Rahman, I. (2014). *The reality of the practice of administrative creativity in the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, an exploratory study*, (in Arabic). Al-Balqa Applied University, Al-Salt, Jordan.
- Ababneh, R; & Al-Shaqran, R. (2013). *The Degree of Practicing Administrative Creativity among Educational Leaders in the Directorates of Education in Irbid Governorate*, *Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences*, (in Arabic). University of Bahrain, 14 (2): 459-686.
- Abu Hamdi, I. (2019). *The reality of administrative creativity in the Directorate of Education in the Aqaba Governorate in Jordan from the viewpoint of its employees*, [PhD thesis. University of Jordan]. (in Arabic). *Journal of Al-Quds Open University for educational and psychological research and studies*. 10(27).
- Abu Jamea, I. (2009). *Institutional culture and administrative creativity in the Jordanian educational institution*, [Unpublished PHD Thesis], (in Arabic). University of Jordan.
- Abu Shamma, M. (2018). Administrative creativity and its impact on achieving competitive advantage in public service institutions - Palestine - from the perspectives of employees. (in Arabic). Ministry of Education and Higher Education - Palestine. at <https://app.oxfordabstracts.com>
- Alfuqaha, S. (2012). *Adopting Excellence Strategies in Learning and Teaching and Their Role in Achieving the Sustainable Competitive Advantage for Higher Education Institutions*, (in Arabic). An-Najah National University Case Study, Research Presented to the First Arab Conference on "Higher Education Strategies and Human Resource Planning" which was held by the Arab Organization for Administrative Development in cooperation with the Hashemite University and Cairo University in the Republic of Arab Egypt, and the Association of Arab Universities in the period 24-26 April 2012 at the Hashemite University.
- Alagala, T. (2009). *Administrative Creativity and its Relationship to Functional Performance of Public Sector Managers "An Applied Study on the Ministries of the Gaza Strip"* [Unpublished MA Thesis]. (In Arabic). Islamic University of Gaza.
- Al-Assaf, A. (2002). *Leadership skills and qualities of a leader*, (in Arabic). Riyadh: Scientific Publishing.
- Al-Awwad, A. (2005). *The reality of administrative creativity and ways to develop it*, [Unpublished MA thesis] , (in Arabic). Prince Nayef Arab University for Security Sciences], Riyadh.
- Assaf, M. (2015). *A proposed strategy to manage creativity as an entry point to achieve competitive advantage in higher education institutions and a proposed strategy to enable it*, (in Arabic). Al-Quds Open University Journal for Educational and Psychological Research and Studies, 3 (9): 109-145.
- Balwani, A. (2008). *The role of school administration in developing creativity in government schools in the northern governorates of Palestine and its obstacles from the point of view of principals*, [unpublished MA thesis], (in Arabic). An-Najah National University, Nablus.
- Bezadog, D. (2015). *The level of administrative creativity of the heads of academic departments in Jordanian universities and its relationship to the level of achieving competitive advantage from the point of view of faculty members*, (in Arabic). [Unpublished MA thesis], Middle East University for Graduate Studies.
- Al-Huwaila, A; & Al-Huwaila, M. (2009). *The Degree of Practicing Behaviors by Principals and Principals of Secondary Schools in the Ahmadi Educational District to Achieve Administrative Creativity*, (in Arabic). *Journal of the Association of Arab Universities*, 53(1): 507-541.
- Majeed, S. (2011). *The impact of competitive advantage on organizational performance*, (In Arabic). *European Journal of Business and Management*, 3(4). 191-196.
- Al-Mahmudi, M. (2019). *Research Methods, 3rd Edition*, (in Arabic). Sana'a, Dar Al-Kutub.
- Almaghribi, M; & khalaf alla, A. (2022). *Artificial intelligence and competitive advantage*. (In Arabic). Al dawlia Scientific Books. pp. 166-167.
- Al-Manasir, A. (2012). *The degree of knowledge management practice among public secondary school principals and its relationship to achieving competitive advantage and ensuring the quality of education in their schools*. [Unpublished PHD thesis], (In Arabic). Amman Arab University.
- Al-Masrouriyeh, N. (2019), *the impact of human resources management at the Ministry of Education on achieving the competitive advantage of post-basic education schools in the Sultanate of Oman*. [MA thesis published by Sultan Qaboos University]. System database.
- Munizu, M. (2013). *The Impact of total quality management practices towards competitive advantage and organizational performance: Case of fishery industry in South Sulawesi province of Indonesia*. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)*, 7(1), 184-197.

Al-Nashmi, M; & Al-Dais, H. (2017). *Administrative creativity and its relationship to achieving competitive advantage in private universities in Yemen*. (In Arabic). Arab Journal of Quality Assurance of University Education. 10(29).

Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit. (2020). *Oman Vision 2040*. <https://www.oman2040.om/>.

Al-Omyan, M. (2002). *Organizational behavior in business organizations*. Dar Wael for publication and distribution.

Al-Rajhi, E. (2021). *The contribution of digital leadership to achieving competitive advantage in the light of the principles of productive universities - a proposed vision*. (In Arabic). Education College. Um Al Qura University.

Al- Salami, A. (2001). *Thoughts in contemporary management*. Dar Gharib Publishing.

Al-Scarana, B. (2011). *Human relations and administrative creativity in educational institutions*. (In Arabic). Taiba Foundation for Publishing and Distribution.

Shaheen A. & Zayed, H. (2009): *Creativity - a study of the psychological, (In Arabic).social and educational foundations of the human phenomenon of creativity*, Dar Al-Shorouk for publication and distribution.

Shelton D. (2010). *Autonomy and organizational justice as moderators of the relationship among creativity, openness to experience, and organizational misbehaviour*, DAI-A, 71.07.

Yaliabik, Z.; Van. Y, Kinnie, N, & Swart, J. (2015). *Engaged and committed the relationship between work engagement and commitment in professional service firms*. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 26(12), 1602-1621.