

## Research Article

## Do Social Life Factors Influence the Leader's Decision Making? A Case of Omani Leaders, Decision Makers and Influential Individuals

Talal Hamad Humood AlRawahi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Nouna Sammari<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Suhaila AlHashemi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD student Faculty of Leadership & Management Islamic Science University of Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor Faculty of Leadership & Management Islamic Science University of Malaysia Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Management College of Economics & Political Science Sultan Qaboos University

\*Corresponding Author

Talal Hamad Humood AlRawahi

**Abstract:** Leaders are considered as change agents who are involved in the process of transforming the organization. During the process of transformation, leaders must take initiatives and would be involved in decision making, therefore, there are certain factors that may influence the process as this study will highlight. The study aimed at investigating and understanding the impact of social life in leading rehabilitation decision making in Oman. 70 participants with leadership positions, decision makers and influential individuals took part in the study. The results revealed social factors have little influence on the leader's decision making, such as the impact of parents during childhood and their educational level, their social status, age and education of the leader as well as gender.

**Keywords:** decision making, leader, leadership, social factors, leading qualification, self-construction, leadership in Oman, Omani leaders, Sultante of Oman.

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the ability to guide, persuade, motivate, create motivating vision and take their followers towards achieving the vision, and succeeding through others (Stanley, 2015). Organizational leaders are expected to set strategies, make decision, solve problems and manage various projects and assignments (Zaccaro, *et al.*, 2004). The effective leader is competent administratively, diplomatic, visionary, honest, focused on performance and generates ideas. According to Zaccaro *et al.*, (2004), while some personality traits can help a person become a leader, most leadership skill can be learned. Looking at leadership in the Arabian Gulf and more specifically in Oman, one finds lack of sufficient research and that very little is understood about the applicability of the concept (AlHashemi, 2017; Common, 2011). There is an argument on whether the traits of a leader are in born traits or learned, according to Zaccaro *et al.*, (2004), traits account for 30% of influence on successful leaders, and 20% remains with external factors such as environment and individual experiences.

### AIM OF THE STUDY

This study followed the descriptive analytical study to investigate and understand the impact of social life in leading rehabilitation decision making in Oman. This study aimed at achieving the following objectives, linking the variables to leadership qualification decision making:

- Gender (male/female).
- Education level (diploma or lower/bachelor/master or above).
- Age category (less than 30 years/from 30 to 40 years/from 41 to 50 years/more than 50 years).
- Original home area (village/city/capital).
- Living status of family during childhood age (low/average/good/high).
- Family social status during the age of social raising (with both mother and father and stable/with both mother and father but not stable/with father only/with mother only/with one of the family relatives other than mother or father).
- Parental education level (illiterate/diploma or lower/bachelor/master or above).

Quick Response Code



Journal homepage:

<http://www.easpublisher.com/easjebm/>

Article History

Received: 09.02.2019

Accepted: 15.02.2019

Published: 25.02.2019

**Copyright © 2019 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study provides an insight into the factors influencing the leader’s decision making and the impact of such factors in the life of a leader which would add a valuable dimension in the literature of leadership and decision making specifically and in management and organizational behavior in general. The study would also contribute to the literature aspects of social life in Oman and the role of such factors in the life of decision makers and organizations especially that literature lacks such topics (Common, 2011).

**METHODOLOGY**

To achieve the objectives of the research and have an in-depth analysis, the descriptive analytical method was followed, using questionnaires targeted at a group of leading personalities in the Sultanate of Oman from various sectors and social backgrounds. The sample size included 70 participants comprising of leaders, influential people and decision makers in various sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. SPSS was used in the analysis and interpretation of results.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a huge body of literature on leadership and leadership development, emphasizing on the importance of leadership in all the sectors and across all cultures (Kamali, *et al.*, 2015). According to Ross (2015). Among the culture-specific leader attributes, “consultation” or “participation” have a different

meaning in this part of the world compared to Western societies and academic teachings (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2007). Abdalla and Al-Homoud (2001) argue that in the Arab world the purpose of consultation is to satisfy the egos of the parties involved rather than to improve the quality of the decision. The concept of consultation, a counterpoise of autocratic rule, has a special value in the Islamic tribal societies (Hofstede, 2013; Abdalla & AlHomoud, 2001). Looking at Oman, Omanis tend to hold on to deeply rooted values throughout the transformation that the country is going through (Common, 2011; AlHashemi, 2013; Allsmaily, 2006; Allsmaily, 2004). Omanis are more ethnically diverse and its cultural diversity is much greater than its Arab neighbors (Common, 2011; Allsmaily, 2006).

**ANAYLSIS & RESULTS**

**Variable "Gender"**

The gender of a leader does not play a major role in terms of influencing the decision making process as shown in table (1), and indicates that there are no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) in every scope according to Gender. This is in line with a study conducted by Abdalla & Al-Homoud, where they found demographic variables have low impact on respondents in their research on effective leadership. Education and friends seem to have more influence on the gender factor but sill not highly significant.

**Table-1 The means and deviation of the study sample according to Gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	male	42	3.84	0.46	0.373	0.544
	female	28	3.71	0.56		
The center of educational potential	male	42	3.26	0.80	0.268	0.606
	female	28	3.52	0.77		
Affected by friends	male	42	3.10	0.78	0.155	0.695
	female	28	2.87	0.82		
Axis of self-construction	male	42	4.05	0.49	2.399	0.126
	female	28	4.21	0.34		

**Variable "Qualification"**

The means and deviation shows that qualification is not very significant and does not have a great impact on the leader’s decision making process as illustrated in Table (2). Regardless of the level of education, we find that the standard deviation and

means are similar at all the levels. Except for the self-construction, it had a higher mean, indicating that the leader is influenced by his own self development and willingness to develop his competencies and skills and not the influence of education.

**Table-2 The means and deviation of the study sample according to Qualifications**

Qualification	n		The focus of parents availability when young	The center of educational potential	Affected by friends	Axis of self-construction
iploma and least	8	Mean	3.88	3.49	3.58	4.24
		Std. Deviation	0.59	1.00	0.95	0.45
bachelor	19	Mean	3.94	3.26	3.10	4.12
		Std. Deviation	0.35	0.79	0.88	0.44
master and above	43	Mean	3.71	3.39	2.86	4.09
		Std. Deviation	0.54	0.77	0.69	0.45
Total	70	Mean	3.79	3.37	3.01	4.12
		Std. Deviation	0.51	0.79	0.80	0.44

To check the deviation between the means, analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used as illustrated in table (3) indicating further that there are no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) in every scope according to Qualification.

**Table -3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Qualifications**

Qualifications		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	Between Groups	0.759	2	0.379	1.507	0.229
	Within Groups	16.862	67	0.252		
	Total	17.62	69			
The center of educational potential	Between Groups	0.365	2	0.182	0.283	0.755
	Within Groups	43.219	67	0.645		
	Total	43.584	69			
Affected by friends	Between Groups	3.695	2	1.848	3.066	0.053
	Within Groups	40.376	67	0.603		
	Total	44.071	69			
Axis of self-construction	Between Groups	0.147	2	0.074	0.369	0.693
	Within Groups	13.379	67	0.2		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.527</b>	<b>69</b>			

**Variable "Age"**

Table (4) shows that the means and deviation of the study sample of the most important social life potential which influence a leader’s decision making is almost the same across all ages. However, the mean for the age group less than 30 is higher which could be a reflection of leaders at a young age are seeking to

explore, learn more and are in the development stage in their career. This is in line with Ross’s (2015) discussions regarding the age of a leader in terms of experience, and how experience leads to change and such experiences helps the individual learn more as they move through a goal-driven process. This justifies the lower means in the higher age categories in Table (4)

**Table-4 The means and deviation of the study sample according to Age**

Age	n		The focus of parents availability when young	The center of educational potential	Affected by friends	Axis of self-construction
less than 30 years	5	Mean	4.02	3.56	3.58	4.09
		Std. Deviation	0.26	0.99	0.65	0.46
30-40 years	60	Mean	3.77	3.33	2.95	4.13
		Std. Deviation	0.53	0.79	0.80	0.44
41-50 years	5	Mean	3.80	3.58	3.13	3.96
		Std. Deviation	0.34	0.83	0.77	0.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>4.12</b>
		<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.44</b>

To check the deviation between the means, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used as revealed in table (5) indicating no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) in every scope according to Age.

**Table-5 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Age**

Age		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	Between Groups	0.277	2	0.139	0.536	0.588
	Within Groups	17.343	67	0.259		
	Total	17.62	69			
The center of educational potential	Between Groups	0.475	2	0.238	0.369	0.693
	Within Groups	43.108	67	0.643		
	Total	43.584	69			
Affected by friends	Between Groups	1.93	2	0.965	1.534	0.223
	Within Groups	42.142	67	0.629		
	Total	44.071	69			
Axis of self-construction	Between Groups	0.145	2	0.073	0.363	0.697
	Within Groups	13.382	67	0.2		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.527</b>	<b>69</b>			

**Variable "Original home"**

Original home refers to the birth place and upbringing of the leader, and table (6) proves that the means and deviation of the study sample according to

original home are the same. This indicates that the world has become like a small village where there values, culture, thoughts have become similar in some aspects and in the study although Oman has a large

population and land area, however, to the leader the birth town does not play a major role in influencing the decision making process. This is also in line with AlHashemi (2013) study in interviewing Omani

managers, found that regardless of the home town, the leader's ideas and practices were similar and did not influence their perspectives or decision making process.

**Table- 6 The means and deviation of the study sample according to Original home**

Original home	n		The focus of parents availability when young	The center of educational potential	Affected by friends	Axis of self-construction
village	20	Mean	3.80	3.28	3.07	4.08
		Std. Deviation	0.54	0.85	0.78	0.49
city	29	Mean	3.89	3.48	3.19	4.13
		Std. Deviation	0.42	0.72	0.83	0.46
capital city	21	Mean	3.64	3.28	2.69	4.12
		Std. Deviation	0.56	0.85	0.71	0.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>4.12</b>
		<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.44</b>

To check the deviation between the means, researcher has used Analyze of Variance (ANOVA) and table (7) expresses that. The table (7) indicates that there are no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) in every scopes according to Original home.

**Table-7 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Original home**

Original home		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	Between Groups	0.79	2	0.395	1.573	0.215
	Within Groups	16.83	67	0.251		
	Total	17.62	69			
The center of educational potential	Between Groups	0.686	2	0.343	0.536	0.588
	Within Groups	42.898	67	0.64		
	Total	43.584	69			
Affected by friends	Between Groups	3.113	2	1.556	2.546	0.086
	Within Groups	40.959	67	0.611		
	Total	44.071	69			
Axis of self-construction	Between Groups	0.04	2	0.02	0.1	0.905
	Within Groups	13.487	67	0.201		
	Total	13.527	69			

**Variable "The standard of living of the family at the young age"**

The means and deviation of the study sample of the most important social life potential which affect

Omani leaders according to the standard of living of the family at the young age, showed no significant results which reflects little influence of this factor on the leader's decision making (see Table (8)).

**Table-8 The means and deviation of the study sample according to The standard of living of the family at the young age**

The standard of living of the family at the young age	n		The focus of parents availability when young	The center of educational potential	Affected by friends	Axis of self-construction
medium(150-500) rial	23	Mean	3.65	3.29	2.95	4.15
		Std. Deviation	0.53	0.90	0.79	0.37
good(510-900 rial)	19	Mean	3.69	3.46	2.95	4.18
		Std. Deviation	0.58	0.75	0.86	0.42
high(910 rial and above)	27	Mean	3.98	3.37	3.09	4.04
		Std. Deviation	0.38	0.77	0.80	0.52
Total	69	Mean	3.79	3.37	3.01	4.12
		Std. Deviation	0.51	0.80	0.80	0.45

To check the deviation between the means, an analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was further presented (Table (9) ) and results indicated no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) according to Original home in the study.

**Table- 9 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for The standard of living of the family**

The standard of living of the family at the young age		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	Between Groups	1.615	2	0.807	3.33	0.042
	Within Groups	16.005	66	0.242		
	Total	17.62	68			
The center of educational potential	Between Groups	0.288	2	0.144	0.22	0.803
	Within Groups	43.275	66	0.656		
	Total	43.563	68			
Affected by friends	Between Groups	0.351	2	0.176	0.265	0.768
	Within Groups	43.713	66	0.662		
	Total	44.064	68			
Axis of self-construction	Between Groups	0.267	2	0.133	0.664	0.518
	Within Groups	13.26	66	0.201		
	Total	13.527	68			

**Variable "The physical condition of the family"**

The results revealed the physical conditions of the family during childhood was not a major factor influencing the leader’s decision making, on the contrary, leaders that had a difficult childhood by losing

one of the parents or were raised in difficult circumstances made the individual stronger in facing such challenges. Table (10) indicates that there are no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) according to the physical condition of the family.

**Table- 10 The means and deviation of the study sample according to The physical condition of the family**

The physical condition of the family		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	stability	48	3.88	0.40	9.218	0.003
	changing	22	3.59	0.65		
The center of educational potential	stability	48	3.41	0.80	0.004	0.951
	changing	22	3.26	0.80		
Affected by friends	stability	48	2.97	0.78	1.334	0.252
	changing	22	3.08	0.85		
Axis of self-construction	stability	48	4.15	0.47	1.241	0.269
	changing	22	4.04	0.38		

**Variable "The social status of the family during socialization"**

The table (11) shows that the means and deviation of the study sample of t the most important

social life potential which affect the Omani leader was not significant, indicating that the social status of the family was not a major determinant that influenced the leader.

**Table- 11 The means and deviation of the study sample according to The social status of the family during socialization**

The social status of the family during socialization	n		The focus of parents availability when young	The center of educational potential	Affected by friends	Axis of self-construction
without stability with parents	9	Mean	3.78	3.63	3.46	4.12
		Std. Deviation	0.51	0.63	0.92	0.39
with father only	3	Mean	3.31	3.26	2.79	4.04
		Std. Deviation	0.89	0.72	1.02	0.73
with mother only	7	Mean	3.76	3.19	2.97	4.04
		Std. Deviation	0.51	1.13	0.86	0.21
Total	19	Mean	3.70	3.41	3.18	4.08
		Std. Deviation	0.57	0.84	0.91	0.38

To check the deviation between the means, analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was further investigated as demonstrated in Table (12), indicating there are no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) in every scope according to the social status of the family during socialization.

**Table- 12 Analyze of Variance (ANOVA) for The social status of the family during socialization**

The social status of the family during socialization		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	Between Groups	0.54	2	0.27	0.82	0.458
	Within Groups	5.265	16	0.329		
	Total	5.804	18			
The center of educational potential	Between Groups	0.84	2	0.42	0.564	0.58
	Within Groups	11.902	16	0.744		
	Total	12.742	18			
Affected by friends	Between Groups	1.487	2	0.744	0.893	0.429
	Within Groups	13.33	16	0.833		
	Total	14.818	18			
Axis of self-construction	Between Groups	0.029	2	0.015	0.091	0.913
	Within Groups	2.552	16	0.16		
	Total	2.582	18			

**Variable "Educational level of parents"**

The means and deviation of the study sample revealed no differences in terms of the educational level of the parents as evident in table (13), and this is

attributed to how leaders do not depend on their parents' educational background in their life and decision making process.

**Table-13 The means and deviation of the study sample according to Educational level of parents**

Educational level of parents	n		The focus of parents availability when young	The center of educational potential	Affected by friends	Axis of self-construction
illiterate	27	Mean	3.69	3.31	2.94	4.16
		Std. Deviation	0.60	0.82	0.77	0.50
diploma and least	32	Mean	3.80	3.40	2.95	4.08
		Std. Deviation	0.47	0.82	0.87	0.40
bachelor	9	Mean	4.04	3.44	3.42	4.15
		Std. Deviation	0.32	0.73	0.61	0.49
Total	68	Mean	3.79	3.37	3.01	4.12
		Std. Deviation	0.51	0.80	0.80	0.45

To further support, analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was extracted as seen in table (14) indicating no differences in terms of statistics at a level of (0.05) in every scope according to Educational level of the parents.

**Table-14 Analyze of Variance (ANOVA) for Educational level of parents**

Educational level of parents		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The focus of parents availability when young	Between Groups	0.867	2	0.433	1.683	0.194
	Within Groups	16.733	65	0.257		
	Total	17.599	67			
The center of educational potential	Between Groups	0.173	2	0.086	0.131	0.878
	Within Groups	42.896	65	0.66		
	Total	43.068	67			
Affected by friends	Between Groups	1.788	2	0.894	1.402	0.254
	Within Groups	41.454	65	0.638		
	Total	43.242	67			
Axis of self-construction	Between Groups	0.106	2	0.053	0.26	0.772
	Within Groups	13.233	65	0.204		
	Total	13.339	67			

### CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership and decision making go hand in hand and are portrayed as the back bone of an organization and the life and heart of its success. Culture makes the leadership process exceptional culture where leaders, providing a framework and base for leadership behaviors and styles. Oman has a different culture setting and is characterized by their deep rooted values (Allsmaily, 2006; Eickelman, 1987). The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of the educational opportunities in childhood and the extent of the influence of family structure, social environment, existence of parents and age, all which affect leadership orientation decision. To fulfill the aims of the study, 70 participants in Oman with leadership personalities were chosen as the specimen of the study. The study revealed no relationship between the existence of parents, educational opportunities, influence of friends, and its impact on leadership rehabilitation decision making. The study revealed no direct relationship between social status of the family, income level and gender with decision making. The results also indicated significant differences between self-development and rehabilitation decision making.

### REFERENCES

- Alhashemi, S. E. (2017). Management profession and culture in transition: A case of Oman. *Tékhne*, 15(2), 108-116.
- AlHashemi, S. E. (2013). June. Challenges Facing Omani Managers in the Public Sector, The Role of Change and Culture. In *International Forum of Researchers, Students and Academician. International Business Review* (Vol. 32, pp. 190-197).
- AlHashemi, S. I. (2006). *Leadership & Emotional Intelligence, A Study of Bahraini Managers* (Doctoral dissertation, Thesis(PhD). Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland).
- Allsmaily, S. B. N. (2006). *Inside Omani management; a research in leadership*

*styles* (Doctoral dissertation, Thesis (PhD). University of St Andrews).

- Allsmaily, S. B. N. (2004). Leadership dynamics in Oman, Oman, *Economic Review* (Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta), (November), 22-29.
- Common, R. K. (2011). Barriers to developing 'leadership' in the Sultanate of Oman. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 6(2), 215-228.
- Eickelman, D. (1987). Ibadism and the sectarian perspective. In B. Pridham (Ed.), *Oman: Economic, social and strategic developments. London: Croom Helm.*
- Javidan, M., & Carl, D. E. (2004). East meets west: a cross-cultural comparison of charismatic leadership among Canadian and Iranian executives. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(4), 665-691.
- Kamali, A., Jayashree, P., & Lindsay, V. (2015). Leadership Development Programs: Investigating the impact of contextual and cultural factors on LDP effectiveness in United Arab Emirates. *International journal of management and applied research*, 2(4), 172-186.
- Randeree, K., & Chaudhry, A. G. (2007). Leadership in project managed environments: employee perceptions of leadership styles within infrastructure development in Dubai. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 3(4), 220-232.
- Ross, S. C. (2015). *The road to self-leadership development: Busting out of your comfort zone.* Emerald Group Publishing.
- Zaccaro, S., Kemp, C., & Bader, P. (2004). Leader traits and attributes. In J, Antonakis, A, Cianciolo, & R Sternberg (Eds.), *The Nature of Leadership. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.*