



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i10/7916>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i10/7916

**Received:** 30 July 2020, **Revised:** 27 August 2020, **Accepted:** 24 September 2020

**Published Online:** 13 October 2020

**In-Text Citation:** (Al Harrasi, Kian, Karim, 2020)

**To Cite this Article:** Al Harrasi, N., Kian, M. W., Karim, A. M. (2020). Assessing Employee's Perception of Relationship between Expert Power and Employee Productivity Behavior at Selected Muscat Governmental Organizations, Sultanate of Oman. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. 10(10), 32-48.

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**Vol. 10, No. 10, 2020, Pg. 32 - 48**

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## **Assessing Employee's Perception of Relationship between Expert Power and Employee Productivity Behavior at Selected Muscat Governmental Organizations, Sultanate of Oman**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of the study is to assess the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations. This research adopts descriptive analytical methodology and the quantitative methodology is the main tool used to gain an in-depth perspective on the examined relationship. The research sample is 405 employees selected from four governmental organizations (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing, Public Authority for SME development and Ministry of Education) located in Muscat. The key finding of the study shown there was a positive relationship between expert powers with employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations. This means that an increase in the value of expert power will cause an increase on employee productivity behaviour. Also, the study finds that the personal characteristics (Gender, Age and Qualifications) have an impact on employees' productivity behaviour. In details, the males have more effect on employee productivity behaviour than females. The age range of more than 51 years old of the employees has more effect on productivity than the other different age groups. The employees holding secondary school certificate have more effect on productivity followed by ppostgraduates employees. Also, the study finds that the employees who have more than 16 years of experience have more effect on employee productivity behaviour. Furthermore, the study finds that an average of 82% of the employees working in Muscat governmental organizations agreed on the following statements: achieving the work assigned to them with great efficiency, having desire and ability to present ideas to improve working methods, having courage, enthusiasm and ability to do more productive works and find solutions related to work problems and finally have confidence to express their ideas and suggestions. The study concluded by suggesting that the policy makers should take into consideration the positive relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour by making sure that the selected or promoted leaders be given with the expert power.

**Keywords:** Expert Power, Employee Productivity Behavior, Revin and Ferench Theory, Muscat Governmental Organizations

## Introduction

Governmental organizations have a vital role in human societies, as Human Resource is the backbone of any organization. The success of governmental organizations to achieve their goals requires various environmental factors (internal factors and external factors). The most important factor in any organization is the organizational environment and its culture. Employees' point of view towards the organization is based on these two set of factors (Balen, Elvira, Dentchev & Haezendonck, 2015; Ebeling, 2015).

Human Resource is the basic element for organization's performance, growth and sustainability (Baron & Greenberg, 2003). (Alshams et al., 2020) mentioned budgetary, infrastructural along with human resource capabilities have significant impact on the performance of government organizations. The employee's performance is a part from the organization management of productivity which can be considered as the pillar of development (AbdulBaqi, 2005). Employee productivity robust the development of organization productivity; thus, if the level of employee productivity is high, the possibility of high organizational performance, growth, and development will be high as well (Al-Mahrooqi, 2016).

Organizational power is a concept formulated by the leaders of organizations. This supports the leaders to create an effective process for the growth of the organization. The main role of the leaders is to manage and control all the process and procedures within the organization, however, this can only be attained with power (Amarjit, Singh & Asce, 2009).

Employee productivity or workplace productivity is an assessment of employee's or a group of employees' efficiencies. It is evaluated by looking at the total workforce or employee output in a given time. Employees must produce value for the organization that exceeds the cost of employee wages as well as provide a worthwhile return to the organization. This can only happen if an employee is productive (Harness, 2018).

According to Zeiger (2018), the leaders whether use positive or negative power to direct and control the employees within the workplace. The effect of positive power leads to improve and develop the employee productivity and the negative power leads to decrease the work quality and higher turnover rate in the organization. Positive power refers to employee empowerment, rewards productive employees and allowing excellent employees performance to supervise others employees. This will help to develop the employee's confidence, motivation and loyalty. Negative power refers to leaders who does not respect the employees and forcing them to work by job loss and punishments threatens. Also, he/she shows favouritism to specific employees.

When employees are working on wrong priorities, not working efficiently, or simply not working as a team (Cain & Haque, 2018): The work takes longer, work flow issue arise. This will result in negative productivity. This research focuses on assessing the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour on Muscat governmental organizations from employee's perspective.

### **Problem Statement**

Currently, the governmental organizations face many challenges and barriers every day as the world is rapidly changing because of globalization. Globalization presents to the world new technology, information revolution, world competition and international agreement of free trade (Baron, & Greenberg, 2003).

The relationship between HR management and organization productivity has been widely discussed and debated in the recent time. The productivity of any organization depends on its employee productivity.

Muscat governmental organizations productivity does not satisfy the Omani citizens as they are consuming lots of time in accomplishing tasks required by the citizen. For example, as per the regulations and license required to establish any business in Oman, it will consume around two to three months to complete any transaction (MOCI, 2018; Muscat Municipality, 2018; MRMWR, 2018). Moreover, the ministry of housing which has the responsibility of providing a land to every Omani citizen consuming around 3 to 6 years from the date of application (MOH, 2018). These work delayed issues by Muscat governmental organizations employees are reflecting poor organization productivity.

In Arab governmental organizations, the employees are required to work 8 hours per day from Sunday to Thursday. The actual average working hours of a governmental employee in Arab States (including the Sultanate of Oman) is between 18 to 25 minutes per day (Al Khaleej Newspaper, 2013; Sobeih, 2013). The remaining working hours of employees are wasted in talking with friends, leaving early, surfing the net, using social media and many others activity which are not related to employee duty (Al Khaleej, 2013; Sobeih, 2013).

Also, as per the global competitiveness report 2016/2017, Oman ranked 102 among 140 countries in Pay and productivity of labor. All these issues and facts lead Muscat governmental organizations to waste time and money and at the same time, Oman government are trying to cut off unnecessary expenses because of oil price fluctuation (Schwab, 2017).

As indicated by (Syverson, 2011) in his extensive review of the determinants of productivity, the majority of studies have identified technology, education, work experiences, and skills of managers and workers, and inputs and output market structures as the main determinants of enterprise/sectoral labour productivity. (Alshamsi, Hock, Karim, & Hossain, 2019) added that adopting technology helps the organizations to achieve the capability of automating business processes in administrative activities.

Muscat governmental organizations have many issues in providing various services to the Citizens of Oman. Employees of governmental organization are required to accomplish the services required by citizens. Therefore, the leaders have to develop the manager's power to influence positively on the employee productivity.

### **Research Objectives**

The aim of this research is to assess the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour. The specific objectives of the research are:

1. To assess the relationship between the expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations.
2. To identify the effects of personal characteristics (Gender, age and qualification) on employee productivity behavior at Muscat Governmental organizations.

### Research Hypotheses

1. Null Hypothesis (Ho1): There is no significant relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour at Muscat governmental organizations.
2. Null Hypothesis (Ho2): There is no significant effect of personal characteristics (gender, age and qualification) on employee productivity behaviour at Muscat governmental organizations.

### Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to four governmental organizations located in Muscat in Sultanate of Oman only. These organizations are: (i) Ministry of Health, (ii) Ministry of Housing, (iii) Ministry of Education and (iv) Public authority for SME development. The researcher has conducted the study during the year 2019. The study focused on employee's perception in Muscat governmental organizations only and did not cover the leaders' and decision-maker's perspectives. Moreover, the study limited to the relationships between expert power and employee productivity behavior.

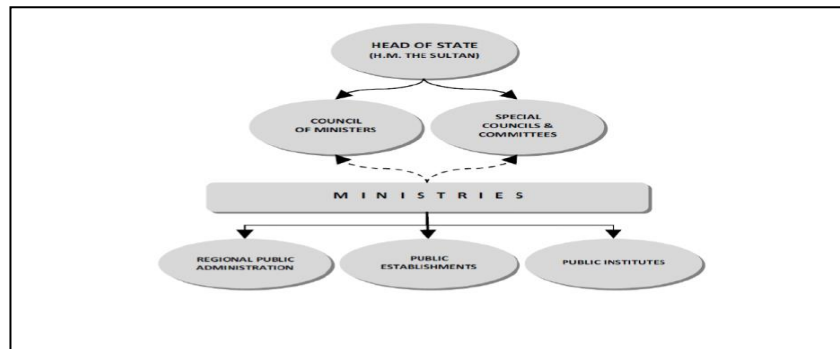
### Literature Review

The public sector concerned to provide the various needed services to the public. It is considered one of the most important parts in any government services. Currently, the needs of more responsive and proactive public services have been increased (Rajasekar, & Khan, 2013). In Sultanate of Oman, the main seeks are the services expansion and create more employment opportunities for Omanis in the different governmental organizations. The leadership of Sultanate of Oman government acknowledge that the public sector improvement is essential to achieve the desired outcomes (Swales, & Al Fahdi, 2011). The great public sector has to expand its role in infrastructure projects like developing the projects related to communication, power, water, and education (International Business Publications, 2009).

Al Obthani (2013) provides in his study an administrative system model of Omani government. The model contained six organizational structures which are Council of Ministers, Special Councils and Committees, the Ministries, Public Establishments, Regional Public Administration, and Public Institutes. In Figure 1, it shows that (HM) Sultan Qaboos is the head of State and there are two types of councils which helped The Majesty to manage the Government. This Council are the Council of Ministers and special councils and committees. The councils are formulated by various ministers based on their specialization and experience. These councils are followed by Ministries, which are Regional Public Administration, Public Establishments and Public Institutes. Each ministry has to do their responsibilities based on the limited decision-making authority of the public organizations. (Al Obthani, Omar & Bakri, 2013)



**Figure 1.** The Government of Oman's Administrative System



### Expert Power

The literature review indicates that Max Weber was the first to attempt to explain the reasons for obedience of the individual or group to others. He believes that a person who has the power able to obey others. This power takes one of three forms: traditional power, Law or authority power and personality power (Weber, 1978). Robert Peabody stated that the power has four main forms: Law or authority power, centralization, sufficiency power and personality power. Yukl said also that the power has two forms: centralization power and personality power (Mark, 2005).

Revin and Ferench divided the source of power into five types which are: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, reference power, and experience power. This classification forms are the basis for most studies managerial power (Raven, 2004).

According to Raven, (2004), expert power refers to the individual ability to influence others based on his/her well known of the works for long time as well as the employees believes that the leader has enough work experience to solve any work problems so they are following his/her instructions. In other words, any leader who has no experience cannot influence others by using this type of power.

Hellriegel, Don & Slocum, (2007) believed that the expert power and knowledge of the work dependence on the ability of the leader to show the employees his/her capabilities and this power is taking time to prove and gain it. This is the main problem for the new recruited individual as he/she has experience and knowledge in field of work but they cannot utilize this power immediately, they will need time to get and gain this power. Expert power and referent power depend on personality characteristics which is different from other powers like reward power, coercive power and legitimate power in which the new leader can get it easily from the organization itself.

### Employee Productivity

The amount of goods or services that an employee can generate under a provided expenditure of effort is the employee productivity, often evaluated with regards to labour time. It indicates the ratio of the quantity produced to the number of employees involved, evaluated as product/services produced per employee-hour or employee-year (Woods, 2018).

The measured employee productivity differs with changes in both input factors and how efficiently the factors of production are employed (total factor productivity). Thus, two organizations or countries having similar total factor productivity (productive technologies) may differ in employee

productivity due to the difference in the capital amount. The “average product of labour” reflects the output per worker and a comparison of it can be made with the marginal product labour which shows a rise in output yielding from a corresponding (marginal) rise in labour input (Woods, 2018).

### **Powers and employee’s productivity behaviour**

There were many studies measuring the employee productivity based on many factors. Furthermore, the current study focused on finding out the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour.

According to Altinkurt & Yilmaz (2012), the school administrator in the primary school was fully used power sources at a high level from teacher point of view. The primary school teachers thought that the school administrators mostly used legitimate power as well as the following respectively: expert power, coercive power, referent power and reward power. Also, the study found that there was a moderate positive relationship between the organizational citizenship behaviour and administrator power sources from the teacher point of view. In this study, the researcher considers only five power bases.

Tjosvold & Sun (2006), measured the effect of power concept and employee performance on managers’ empowering. The study found that the participant using their maximum power to help, encourage and empower employees when they viewed power as expandable rather than limited or independent. This study has evaluated the concept of power collectively without breaking up the different source of power.

According to Michael (2008), there is a relationship between organizational power and perceptions of leadership. The study found that these power bases may contribute toward positive or negative employee perceptions of leadership. The employee Perceptions of leadership are formulated by two main factor which are: communication approach of the leader and the utilized power bases to control the employee’s activities to achieve the goals. Also, the study indicates that the greater influence of organizational power into employees’ activities come from expert and referent power.

On overall, the literature review indicates that there is a relationship between the leader’s power and employee productivity. This study measures the level of relationship between expert power and employee productivity at Muscat governmental organization.

### **Research Methodology**

This study aims to identify the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations, it fits in the category of basic research. The research took on a descriptive analytical methodology for assessing the relationship and how it makes employees more productive at Muscat governmental organizations. The researcher adopted a survey strategy. The researcher acquired the data using quantitative data methods. Data collection for this study is based on primary and secondary data. The variables measured by the five-dimensional Likert scale. The target population is four governmental organizations (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing, Public authority for SME development and Ministry of Education) located in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. By using the Yamane’s formula of sample size with an error of 5% and 95% of confidence level, the calculation from the population of 22,443 employees working in Muscat governmental organizations came up with 400 employees. The method of purposive sampling

adopted to develop the sample of the research. Construct validity of the study instrument assured by using PCF and Criterion validity by correlation coefficient test. By using Cronbach Alpha test, the questionnaire reliability revealed of 0.83 (83%) which refers to very good internal consistency.

### Conceptual Framework

The study frame work formulated from the theoretical principles and previous studies as illustrated in “Figure. 2”. The independent variables of this study are Expert Power which based on the power theory of Revin and Ferench, 1958. The mediator is demographic (Gender, Age, and qualification). Furthermore, the dependent variable is employee productivity behaviour which formulated using theory X and Y of Douglas McGregor.

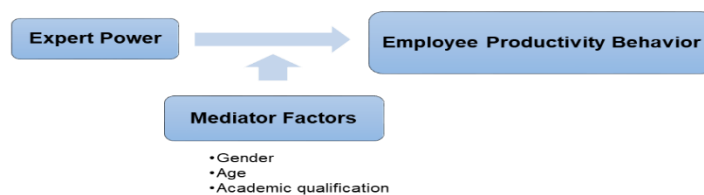


Figure 2. Study conceptual framework

### Findings

This section divided into two parts where descriptive statistics and inferential statistics are explored.

### Sample Demographics

Table 1 show that Male respondents are more than the Females. Also, about 88 % <sup>1</sup> of respondents are under the age of 40 and 45 % of respondents having bachelor degree where only 11% are holding post graduate certificate.

<sup>1</sup> Total of individual who are Less than 30 years and from 31 to 40 years



**Table 1.** Sample Demographics

Demographic variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	237	59%
	Female	168	41%
	Total	405	100%
Age	Less than 30 years	156	39%
	31 to 40 years	200	49%
	41 to 50 years	42	10%
	More than 51 years	7	2%
Qualification	Secondary School	71	18%
	Higher Diploma	109	27%
	Bachelor Degree	182	45%
	Post Graduate	43	11%

**Frequency**

The below table indicates high level of agreement towards expert power statements. 87.4 % of the respondents agree that the job occupied by their manager requires diverse knowledge of work activities. Furthermore, 80% of the respondents agree that their manager has extensive experience in the organization’s industry as well as the manager can influence employees by his/her experience.

**Table 2.** Expert power statements frequency

SL	Statements	Dis agree	Neut ral	Agree	Total
1	The manager has extensive experience in the organization's industry	33	49	323	405
		8%	12.20%	80.10%	100%
2	The job occupied by the manager requires diverse knowledge of work activities	16	35	354	405
		4%	8.60%	87.40%	100%
3	The manager can influence employees by his/her cumulative experience.	28	57	320	405
		7%	14%	80.00%	100%
4	The manager can influence employees by his/her experience	29	62	314	405
		7%	15.30%	77.50%	100%
5	The manager can resolve work problems through his/her work experiences.	27	58	320	405
		7%	14.30%	79.00%	100%
6	The manager can distinguish between productive and non-productive ideas through his/her experience.	32	93	280	405
		8%	23.00%	69.20%	100%

Also, the below table indicates high level of agreement towards productivity behaviour statements. An average of 86% of the respondents agree that they have courage and enthusiasm to

do more productive works, desire to make suggestions to develop new working methods, support their colleagues at work to be more productive and come up with ideas to improve the work and confidence to express their ideas and suggestion. However, only 64% of the respondents agree that they have enough authority to make particular decisions.

**Table 3.** Employee Productivity behaviour statements frequency

SL	Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
1	I am delighted enough authority to make particular decisions	43	104	258	405
		10.70%	25.80%	64.00%	100%
2	I have courage and enthusiasm to do more productive works	15	44	346	405
		3.70%	10.90%	85.40%	100%
3	I have the desire to make suggestions to develop new working methods	14	42	349	405
		3.00%	10%	86.00%	100%
4	support my colleagues at work to be more productive and come up with ideas to improve the work	11	34	360	405
		2.70%	8.40%	88.90%	100%
5	I have confidence to express my ideas and suggestion	17	46	342	405
		4.20%	11.40%	84.40%	100%

### Means and Standard Deviations

The below table indicates that most respondents believed the statements of expert power are at a desirable status in their organizations.

**Table 4.** Expert power statements Means and SD

S.L	Statements	Mean	SD
1	The manager has extensive experience in the organization's industry	4.022	0.996
2	The job occupied by the manager requires diverse knowledge of work activities	4.289	0.822
3	The manager can influence employees by his/her cumulative experience	4.079	0.997
4	The manager can influence employees by his/her experience	4.015	0.925
5	The manager can resolve work problems through his/her work experiences	4.003	0.900
6	The manager can distinguish between productive and non-productive ideas through his/her experience	3.815	0.922
Total		4.037	0.927

The below table indicates that most respondents believe that the component of productivity behaviour is at a desirable status in their organizations.

**Table 5.** Employee Productivity behaviour statements Means and SD

S.L	Statements	Mean	SD
1	I am delighted enough authority to make particular decisions	3.701	0.970
2	I have courage and enthusiasm to do more productive works	4.14	0.759
3	I have the desire to make suggestions to develop new working methods	4.239	0.792
4	support my colleagues at work to be more productive and come up with ideas to improve the work	4.321	0.771
5	I have confidence to express my ideas and suggestion	4.209	0.822
Total		4.122	0.823

**Internal Consistency Reliability**

The researcher adopted Cronbach’s Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the survey instruments. The recommended threshold value of Cronbach’s Alpha is higher than 0.70. The below table shows the Cronbach’s Alpha value of each constructs in the study questionnaire. The Overall Cronbach’s Alpha value of the survey instruments is 0.83.

**Table 6.** Cronbach’s Alpha of questionnaire items

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Experience Power	Item no. 1-6	0.873
Productivity behavior	Item no. 7-11	0.756
Overall Internal Consistency		0.830

**Test of Normality**

The researcher adopted the well-known tests namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and the Shapiro-Wilk Test. The interpretation of the result depends on the value of the significance. If the significance value of both tests is greater than 0.05, the data is normal and If it is below 0.05, the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. (Laerd Statistics., 2019). The below table presents the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Sig. less than 0.05) and the Shapiro-Wilk Test (Sig. less than 0.05) which refers that this study data is non normal distribution.

**Table 7.** Test of Normality

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Expert power	0.129	405	0.000	0.911	405	0.000
Productivity behaviour	0.119	405	0.000	0.928	405	0.000

**Spearman Rank Correlation**

The below table shows that there is a positive weak relationship between expert power and productivity behaviour ( $r= 0.359$ ). This refers that any increase in the value of expert power will be positively affecting the employee productivity at Muscat governmental organizations.

**Table 8.** Spearman’s Correlation result

S.L	Variables		Productivity Behaviour
1	Expert power	Correlation Coefficient	.359**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
		N	405

At 5% level of significance, the result of Spearman's Correlations shows a moderate positive relationship (0.359) between the expert power and employee productivity behaviour and the corresponding statistical significance is (0.000). Since the P value is equal to 0.000, the null hypothesis Ho1 is rejected and accepts the alternative hypothesis which is:

**“There is a significant relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations”**

**Kruskal-Wallis test**

The analysis of the effect of personal characteristics on employee productivity behaviour is based on the Kruskal Wallis Test. Summarized Results of Kruskal Wallis Test for the different components are presented in table 9.

**Table 9.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results

Demographic variables	Employee Productivity			
	Options	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig.
Gender	Male	23309.13	1065.27	0.000
	Female	19324.48		
Age	Less than 30 Years	21763.57	109.818	0.000
	31 to 40 years	21713.37		
	41 to 50 years	20578.32		
	more than 50 years	25483.54		
Qualification	Secondary School	25538.49	1597.47	0.000
	Higher Diploma	19539.89		
	Bachelor Degree	20567.65		
	Post Graduate	25069.32		



In Gender, A Kruskal-Wallis test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in employee productivity behaviour between males and females,  $\chi^2(2) = 1065.27$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , with a mean rank of 23309.13 for Males and 19324.48 for females.

The result of Age shows that there is a statistically significant difference in employee productivity behaviour between the different age group,  $\chi^2(2) = 109.818$   $p = 0.000$ , with a mean rank of 21763.57 for less than 30 years, 21713.37 for 31 to 40 years, 20578.32 for 41 to 50 years and 25483.54 for more than 50 years.

The result of qualification shows that there is a statistically significant difference in employee productivity behaviour between the different qualification groups,  $\chi^2(2) = 1597.47$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , with a mean rank of 25538.49 for Secondary school, 19539.89 for higher diploma, 20567.65 for bachelor degree and 25069.32 for post graduate.

In summary and at 5% level of significance, the personal characteristics (Gender, Age and qualifications) has affected the employee productivity behaviour at Muscat governmental organizations.

Moreover, at 5% level of significance, the result of Kruskal Wallis Test shows a significant impact of personal characteristics (Gender = 1065.27, Age = 109.818 and Qualification = 1597.47) on employee productivity behaviour in Muscat Governmental organizations and the corresponding statistical significance is (0.000) for all personal characteristics. Since the P value is equal to 0.000 for Gender, Age and Qualification, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected and accept the alternative hypothesis which is:

*“There is a significant effect of personal characteristics (gender, age, and qualification) on employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations”*

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The main objective of this research is to assess the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations in Oman. A quantitative study of 405 employees working at the selected governmental organizations in Muscat is undertaken to gain a greater insight into the expert power policy.

The first Objective of the study is to assess the relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations. The study indicates a positive moderate relationship between expert power and employee productivity behaviour in Muscat governmental organizations. This means that an increase in utilizing expert power will cause an increase in employee's productivity behaviour. The managers and leaders should have expert power in order to enhance employee's productivity behaviour.

The second objective is to identify the effect of personal characteristics (Gender, age and qualification) on employee's productivity behaviour in Muscat Governmental organizations. The study indicates that the personal characteristics of gender, age and qualification have affect the overall employee productivity behaviour. In particular, the Males have more effect on employee productivity behaviour than females. The employees who are more than 51 years old working in Muscat governmental organizations has more effect on productivity than other different age groups. The employee holding secondary schools were having more effect on productivity followed by Post

graduated employees. Also, the study finds that employees having more than 16 years of experience have more effect on productivity.

### Recommendations

1. This study has enabled identification of key recommendations for the public sector within Oman:
2. The Governmental organization leaders should utilize the expert power effectively to enhance the employee's productivity behaviour and can do so by highlighting the positive effects of utilizing the expert power on improving the employee productivity behaviour.
3. The policy makers should take into consideration the positive effects of expert power on enhancing the employee productivity behaviour by making sure that the selected or promoted leaders have the desired expert power.
4. The governmental organizations should also consider the effects of personal characteristics (age, gender and qualification) in enhancing the overall employee productivity behaviour.

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