Educational Research Policy and its Institutions in Oman

GCES 2013 Symposium Program
Bridging the Policy, Research Divide in Education in the GCC

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Sultan Qaboos University
Introduction

Products of scholarly research activities bring benefit to:

- the institution,
- the individuals affiliated with it,
- the public,
- the society.
History

- Research in education aimed at developing educational policies stems back a very short period only, hardly more than 25 years.
Higher education and scholarly research

- Higher education institutions, Research Centers and Councils hold a key role in promoting development necessary for facing the power of globalization, as well as driving rapid transformation to the society.

- There is a rising need in the Arab world for a complete re-examination of higher education, research policy and planning in order to overhaul those three sectors and improve their quality to meet society’s demands.

- In Oman, there are a lot of efforts to develop educational research within the existing institutions.
Research Aims

Contributes to education system development and improvement particularly by:

- the dissemination and translation of valuable knowledge or research finding into the field;
- the creation of ethical and evidence-based research policies, including norms and standards;
- the promotion, monitoring and implementation of high quality education research evidence.
The status of educational research policies, challenges and reforms in The Sultanate of Oman

This paper tackles the following questions:

• What is the status of Oman’s general and educational research policy?

• What efforts have been done by institutions concerned (SQU & Oman Research Council)?

• What are the challenges to be tacked to make educational research policy more effective?

• What are the suggestions to improve the existing policy?
Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)
Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)

The various Royal Decrees have always stipulated research as one of its objectives. The latest university charter (71/2006) stated the following research objectives (SQU, 2008:9).

• conduct basic and applied research and studies for the benefit of society, in particular to seek scientific and practical solutions for economic and social problems;

• relate research and studies to the overall development plans and the future vision of the Omani society in general;

• prepare generations of Omani researchers, experts and scientists in various branches of science, arts and humanities.
The Research MISSION & Vision of SQU

- **MISSION**: to conduct quality research, in an academic environment, to generate knowledge, build capacity and find solutions for strategic issues in Oman.

- **VISION**: to develop a research culture and capacity that make SQU a regional leader, recognized internationally (SQU, Deanship of Research, 2013).
The purpose of SQU research policy is to:

- provide a framework for the governance of research and research development;
- affirm research as a priority;
- provide for continued high-level, effective and efficient support for research;
- ensure the fair treatment of all researchers, staff and students;
- ensure effective communication (internally and externally) about the principles and policies on which the research activities of the University are founded;
- establish rational, transparent and collective decision-making processes around the allocation of research funds and other kinds of support for research;
- balance the needs of research capacity development against those of established researchers;
- integrate support for postgraduate research into the main research system; and
- clarify roles and functions within the university research system.
SQU Research Centers

- Center of Excellence in Marine Biotechnology
- Communication and Information Research Center
- Earthquakes Monitoring Center
- Environment Studies and Research Center
- Oil and Gas Research Center
- Omani Studies Center
- Remote Sensing and GIS Center
- Water Research Center
- Humanities Research Center.
Humanities Research Center

The center attempts to achieve the following objectives related to research:

• Initiate surveys and conduct empirical research on social, educational and business phenomena that accompany the processes of change development and modernization in contemporary Omani society.

• Conduct any social research programs requested by international, non-governmental and business organizations.

• Strengthen collaborative ventures between the university and outside partners especially by supporting and actively encouraging inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research.

• Undertake research on behalf of governments, public and private sector agencies.
The University measures to improve research planning and management

- The Deanship for Research- Under the guidance of Deputy Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Research (DVC-PSR).
- University Executive Regulations
- Postgraduate Academic Regulations
- Copyright Policy
- Intellectual Property (IP) policy.
- The Innovation Affairs Department (IAD).
- The Guidelines for Grants Contracts and Consultancy.
- Research Funds.
- Strategic Research Funds.
Information usually documented about researches – CE

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<th>SR.</th>
<th>CODE NO.</th>
<th>RESEARCH’s TITLE</th>
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Examples

RESEARCH’s TITLE

Standardization of Ravens Progressive Matrices Test in Four Major Regions of the Sultanate of Oman 1999

Causes of Teachers Absence in Relation to their Attitudes Toward Teaching in the Sultanate of Oman 2010

Construction of a New Efficacy Scale for Omani Teachers of Students with Learning Disabilities 2011
CE Number of Researches- 1999-2013

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The Research Council (TRC) was established on 22nd of June 2005, according to the Royal Decree number 54/2005.

Its main duty is to regulate, encourage & support the research affairs.

It carries tasks related to research and endeavors to promote and support research using all the material and moral means possible (Al Hinai, 2013).
The Research Council is the main national authority in this area, acts as a focal point for research and innovation and liaise with various institutions concerned with research.
TRC has four main objectives

- Building Research Capacity Mechanisms
- Achieving Research Excellence
- Building Knowledge Transfer and Value Capture
- Provide an Enabling Environment for Research and Innovation
TRC duties are stated as follows:

- Organize & Support the research activities.
- Set up a national research strategy and follow up its development.
- Specify priorities in the national research strategy.
- Prepare programs for implementation of the national research priorities.
- Announce the national research strategy and its priorities.
- Support the individual creativity and research plans
- Support publication of valuable scientific outputs & Prepare for research budget requirements.
- Create an innovation ecology that is responsive to local needs and international trends.
- Any other issues to be delegated by His Majesty related to research.
Sectors

1. Education & Human Resources
2. Health & Social Services
3. Energy & Industry
4. Culture, Humanities & Basic Sciences
5. Biological & Environmental Resources
6. Information Technology & Communications
Number of Researched Approved or on Process 2009-2013
TRC Procedure to assist the research proposals

- Novelty of the research proposal.
- Scientific significance of the proposal objectives.
- Research team capability to conduct the project.
- Budget estimation
- Capacity building.
- Economic Impact.
- Non-economic impact.
<p>| التحديات التي تواجه البحث التربوي | Challenges facing educational research. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. The Gap between educational research and decision-makers.</th>
<th>1. الانفصال بين البحث التربوي وصناع القرار</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Many of the perpetrators of the decisions depend on their functional expertise.</td>
<td>2. اعتماد الكثيرين من منفذي القرارات على خبراتهم الوظيفية.</td>
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<td>3. Social and humanity phenomena are in continuous change.</td>
<td>3. تغيير الظواهر الاجتماعية وال الإسلامية.</td>
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<td>4. Scarcity of Codified research channels</td>
<td>3. ندرة قنوات البحث المقننة.</td>
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<td>5. Administrative bureaucracy and the difficulty of procedures</td>
<td>4. البيروقراطية الإدارية وصعوبة الإجراءات.</td>
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<td>Lack of faith among practitioners of the importance of Educational Research</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<td>انعزال البحث التربوي عن مناهج المستقبلية.</td>
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<td>ضعف اتمام الكفاءات الوافدة لحضارة وثقافة البلد.</td>
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6. إيمان الممارسين بأهمية البحث التربوي.

7. ضعف وجود أولويات للبحث التربوي.

7. انعزال البحث التربوي عن مناهج المستقبلية.

8. قلة المعرفة بالمراكز البحثية.

9. ضعف اتمام الكفاءات الوافدة لحضارة وثقافة البلد.